HR & EMPLOYMENT LAW INSIDER: YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE

March 2026

HR Solutions

Contents

RECENT AND FUTURE CHANGES

RECENT CHANGES

NEW FINANCIAL GRANT FOR EMPLOYERS

The Government announced on 16 March 2026 its plans to help tackle youth unemployment by the creation of 200,000 jobs. Called the Youth Jobs Grant.

The Work and Pensions Secretary, Pat McFadden MP, said:
'A 'New Deal' for young people includes:

- A new Youth Jobs Grant, through which businesses will receive £3,000 for every young person they hire aged 18–24 who has been on UC [universal credit] and looking for work for six months. This is expected to support 60,000 young people over three years.
- Expansion of the Jobs Guarantee to a wider age range, from 18–21 to 18–24, to create more than 35,000 extra subsidised jobs. This brings the total to be supported through the scheme to over 90,000 in the next three years.
- An Apprenticeship Incentive of £2,000 for each new employee aged 16–24 taken on by an SME. As part of wider reforms, this will drive progress to our target of creating 50,000 more apprenticeships.
- Further reforms to the Growth and Skills Levy to prioritise young apprentices, secure value for money and give school and college leavers more opportunities than ever to build careers in cutting edge industries.'

Also published is the Government's 'Jobs guarantee grant guidance', which sets out the grant requirements, funding and payment schedules, and administration of the grant application process. We will be providing further clarity on this in the coming days.

FUTURE CHANGES

LEGISLATION – BY IMPLEMENTATION DATE

2026

1 April 2026 – Increases to the National Minimum/Living Wage

New rates are:

21 years and above = £12.71 per hour
18 to 20 years = £10.85 per hour
Under 18 years and apprentice = £8.00 per hour
Apprentice 19+ in first year = £8.00 per hour
Apprentice 19+ in second year = the NMW for their age (£10.85 or £12.71 per hour)
Provision of living accommodation = £11.10 per day.

5 April 2026 – Increases to statutory family rates

The new flat rate for statutory adoption, maternity, parental bereavement paternity, shared parental pay is £194.32 per week.

6 April 2026 – Increase to maternity allowance and SSP

The rate of maternity allowance increases to £194.32.
The rate of statutory sick pay increases to £123.25 per week (see further details on SSP reforms below)

6 April 2026 – Increases to van benefit and car and van fuel benefit

The Van Benefit and Car and Van Fuel Benefit Order 2025 introduces the following new rates:

£4,170 for the van benefit charge
£29,200 for the car fuel benefit charge multiplier
£978 for the Van Fuel Benefit Charge.

6 April 2026 – Social Security (Contributions) (Rates, Limits and Thresholds Amendments, National Insurance Funds Payments and Extension of Veteran's Relief) Regulations 2026

These Regulations set the UK National Insurance rates, thresholds and limits for the 2026/28 tax year and will:

- increase the small profits threshold which is the threshold over which Class 2 National Insurance contributions (NICs) are treated as paid from £6,845, to £7,105.
- increases the rate at which Class 2 NICs are payable by self-employed earners, from £3.50 to £3.65 per week
- increase the rate of voluntary Class 3 NICs, from £17.75 to £18.40
- maintain at the same level as the previous year, the weekly earnings limits and thresholds, which are used for determining liability to Class 1 NICs and entitlement to associated state benefits, except for the lower earnings limit, which is increased from £125 to £129
- extend zero-rate contributions for armed forces veterans to the 2026–27 and 2027–28 tax years

6 April 2026 – Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026

These Regulations introduce a new statutory entitlement for an employee to be absent from work to care for a child during the first year following the child's birth, placement for adoption, or entry into Great Britain in connection with or for the purposes of an adoption from overseas, if the child's primary carer dies.

6 April 2026 – Reforms under the Employment Rights Act 2025

- Doubling the maximum period of the protective award for failing to comply with statutory information and consultation requirements for collective redundancies
- 'Day 1' Paternity Leave and unpaid parental leave
- Removal of the restriction that prevents employees taking paternity leave and pay following a period of shared parental leave and pay
- Whistleblowing protections broadened to include sexual harassment that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- Statutory sick pay – the removal of the lower earnings limit and waiting period
- Simplifying the trade union recognition process
- Gender pay gap and menopause action plans (initially voluntary in 2026, but mandatory in 2027)

6 April 2026 – Legal duty to retain holiday pay and leave records

A new legal obligation for employers to retain records relating to holiday, and holiday pay on leaving, for a minimum of six years, aligning with other current legal obligations in respect of SSP and NMW. The six-year period begins from the date the record is created.

6 April 2026 – Part 2 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003

This Act will make recruitment agencies accountable for Pay As You Earn (PAYE) on payments made on or after 6 April 2026 to workers supplied through umbrella companies (or the end client, where there is no agency).

It will make the agency and umbrella company jointly and severally liable and allowing HMRC to pursue either or both.

If there is more than one agency in the supply chain, the rules will apply to the agency that has the direct contract with the end client to supply the worker. Where there is no agency, or whether the agency holds a material interest in the umbrella company, the liability will fall directly on the end client.

7 April 2026 – Establishment of the Fair Work Agency

The Fair Work Agency body is established by bringing together existing state enforcement functions including regulations for employment agencies, employment businesses, the unpaid employment tribunal award penalty scheme, and enforcement of the NMW, SSP, holiday pay, the licencing regime for businesses operating as 'gangmasters' in certain sectors and enforcement of parts 1 and 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015established

October 2026 – Employment Rights Act 2025

- Establish the Fair Pay Agreement Adult Social Care Negotiating Body in England
- Tightening tipping law by requiring employers to consult with workers to ensure fair tip allocation
- Requiring employers to take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of their employees
- New obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties
- Introducing a power to enable regulations, that specify steps that are to be regarded as reasonable to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment (the actual steps to specify what is to be regarded as reasonable is due in 2027)
- Introducing a new duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union
- Strengthen trade unions' right of access
- Unfair practices in the trade union recognition process
- New rights and protections for trade union reps
- Extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action
- Two tier procurement

Not before October

Employment tribunal time limits extended from 3 months to 6 months

December 2026 – Amendment to the Seafarers Wages Act 2023

The Employment Rights Act 2025, section 56, scheme 5 strengthens workers' rights at sea in relation to wages, terms and conditions of employment or engagement and working conditions.

New regulatory framework to bar NHS managers for misconduct (mid-late 2026/early 2027)

Legislation to introduce a new regulatory framework for NHS managers is expected in 2026. The framework will establish a statutory barring system for board-level directors who commit serious misconduct, with new powers granted to the Health and Care Professions Council to disbar senior leaders. The regulations aim to prevent managers found guilty of misconduct from taking other NHS roles and include specific protections for whistleblowers.

2027

1 January 2027 - Employment Rights Act 2025

- 6-month qualifying service for ordinary unfair dismissal protection
- Removal of the compensatory cap.
- Dismissals connected to an employer seeking to vary an employee's contract, but the employee does not agree will be automatically unfair

January 2027 - Employment Rights Act 2025

- Gender pay gap and menopause action plans to become mandatory
- Enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant workers, and those on and returning from family leave

- Specifying steps that are to be regarded as 'reasonable', to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment
- Updated rules relating to protections from blacklisting due to trade union membership or activity
- Industrial relations framework
- Changes to the threshold for when collective redundancy consultation applies
- Enhanced redundancy protections against dismissal or redundancy
- An employer's reason for refusing a flexible working request must be reasonable
- A new statutory entitlement to bereavement leave, including pregnancy loss
- The regulation of umbrella companies
- Right to guaranteed hours and the right to reasonable notice and short notice payments
- Electronic and workplace balloting for recognition and derecognition ballots
- Provision of information relating to outsourced workers, a requirement for private and voluntary sector employers with at least 250 employees in Great Britain, and public authorities, to publish information about the service providers that they contract with for outsourced services.
- Extends the scope of the Employment Agencies Act 1973 to cover other types of business, such as umbrella companies, that participate in arrangements under which people are supplied by their employer to work for other people or organisations.
- Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and confidentiality provisions in employment making void a contractual provision that purports to preclude a worker from making an allegation or disclosure about relevant harassment or discrimination (or an allegation or disclosure relating to the employer's response).

April 2027 - Mandatory Payrolling Benefits

From April 2027, all employers will be required to payroll benefits in kind. A P11D will still be required for the tax year 2025/26 and 2026/27, but from 2027/28 onwards, it will be mandatory for benefits to be payrolled. Until such time, it continues to be voluntary, and we expect draft legislation and guidance to be provided in due course. The Government have published a timeline in preparing for this change, available here.

Date to be confirmed (must be by June 2027) - The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law)

This Act received royal ascent on 3rd April 2025 however the regulator (Security Industry Authority - SIA) have said that there will be at least 24 months required in preparing for the law to come into force.

In the meantime, premises and events seeking advice on preparing for Martyn's Law should continue to look for Home Office updates. They can also access free technical guidance and operational advice on protective security on the government partner websites of the National Protective Security Authority and ProtectUK.

2028

6 April 2028 – Pension age increase
The new normal minimum pension age will become 67 years from 2028, following the amendment to Part 4 of the Finance Act 2004 (pension schemes etc).

LEGISLATION DATE UNKNOWN

Pensions (Extension of automatic enrolment) Act 2023 (date to be confirmed)
This legislation removes the current age requirements for eligible workers to be automatically enrolled into a workplace pension. The current minimum age is 22 years, but this will be reduced to 18 years. No date has been set for when this legislation comes into force.

Sunday trading – Protection for shop workers
The right of shop workers to opt out of working Sundays on religious or family grounds is to be extended to any 'additional' hours above their normal hours which they may normally be obliged to work if requested. The duty of employers to advise workers of these rights is also to be extended.

The Enterprise Act 2016 contains provisions to strengthen certain aspects of the protections given under the Employment Rights Act 1996 specific to shop and betting workers. This Act received Royal Assent, i.e. became law on 4 May 2016, but the provisions making the Sunday working amendments have not yet been brought into force.

In addition, the amendments to ERA 1996 envisaged the making of regulations as secondary legislation to fill in the detail of how the revised legislation would work, and that secondary legislation has not yet been published, although the power to make it is in force. With a change in Government since this came into force, the current government have not given any indication that it intends to enact this legislation and so we have no precise indication as to when these changes will take effect, or if they will ever come into force.

Children and Social Work Act 2017 Whistleblowing – Protection for children's social care applicants

Section 32 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 when it commences will allow the Employment Rights Act of 1996, s 49C to enable the introduction of regulations that prohibit relevant employers from discriminating against an applicant for a children's social care position because it appears that they have made a protected disclosure. At this time, draft regulations are yet to be published.

KEY EMPLOYMENT BILLS PROGRESSING THROUGH PARLIAMENT

Bullying and Respect at Work Bill
This private members Bill if passed, would introduce a statutory definition of bullying at work. In addition, it would make a provision relating to bullying at work that includes enabling claims relating to workplace bullying to be considered by an employment tribunal. It would also introduce a Respect at Work Code that would set minimum standards for positive and respectful work environments and give powers to the Equality and Human Rights Commission to investigate workplaces and organisations where there is evidence of a culture of, or multiple incidents of, bullying and to take enforcement action. The Bill had its first reading in the House of Commons on 21 October 2024, and the second reading is expected 27 March 2026.

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill
This Bill is about the safeguarding and welfare of children, support for children in car, the regulation of care workers, establishments and agencies and independent educational institutions and inspections of schools and colleges, as well as dealing with teach misconduct. This Bill is near the end of its parliamentary process waiting for the House of Commons consideration of amendments/reasons on 25 March 2026. After which point, it will pass over for being given Royal Assent (date unknown).

Company Directors (Duties) Bill
If passed, this Private Members' Bill, would amend section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 to require company directors to balance their duty to promote the success of the company with duties in respect of the environment and the company's employees. It is early in the process and currently waiting a date for the next stage which is its second reading.

The Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Bill
This Bill proposes to provide employees who are victims of domestic abuse with up to 10 days paid leave each year to support in dealing with the many challenges experienced when trying to leave the relationship. This is currently at the 2nd reading stage in the House of Commons and is scheduled to take place 17 April 2026.

Equality (Race and Disability) Bill
We know through the Employment Rights Bill, that the Government are seeking to reform areas of equality relating to race and disability. A standalone Bill is expected to be launched in 2026 following a period of public consultation. It is expected that the Bill will include:

- Introducing mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting, modelled on the existing gender pay gap framework.
- Extending equal pay rights to ethnic minority and disabled workers, allowing claims on contractual equal pay grounds.
- Potential establishment of a specialist enforcement or regulatory body to oversee compliance and coordinate action plans.

CONSULTATION AND GUIDANCE

OPEN CONSULTATIONS

MAKE WORK PAY: THRESHOLD FOR TRIGGERING COLLECTIVE REDUNDANCY

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) have published a public consultation seeking views on the level and methods by which employers must collectively consult when proposing redundancies. In particular, what threshold should be in place for triggering collective redundancy consultations.

Under current rules, employers only must fulfil collective redundancy obligations when making 20 or more redundancies at a single establishment. The government notes this has led to instances where large numbers of employees are not consulted because redundancies are spread across multiple sites. The Employment Rights Act 2025 will change this by requiring consultation based on the total number of redundancies across an employer's entire organisation.

The Government has narrowed the focus to two specific options for setting the new threshold:

1. **A single fixed number:** This would be a set threshold within the range of **250 to 1,000** redundancies across the organisation.
2. **Tiered obligations:** This approach would involve **tiering the obligation** based on the total number of employees in the organisation.

The government is currently seeking responses from all interested parties on these two proposals, which will eventually require Parliamentary approval before taking effect. We encourage all employers to participate in all these consultations, as this helps the Government in developing UK wide policy.

The consultation runs until **21 May 2026**. It applies to England, Scotland, and Wales and you can participate online or via email to collectiveredundancy@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

MAKE WORK PAY: MODERNISING THE AGENCY WORK REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Government has launched a consultation as part of its 'Make Work Pay' reforms, focusing on updating the rules that govern agency work and the wider temporary labour market. The consultation is seeking views on how to modernise the regulatory framework for agency work, particularly in light of the growing use of umbrella companies.

Key aims include:

- bringing umbrella companies fully within regulation for the first time,
- Improving transparency around pay, contracts and employment rights
- Strengthening protections for agency workers while maintaining labour market flexibility
- Updating outdated legislation to reflect modern working practices and reduce unnecessary admin burdens

The Government is trying to strike a balance between worker protection and business agility in a labour market that has evolved significantly since the current rules were introduced.

The consultation is open to employers, agencies, workers and stakeholders involved in the temporary labour market. We encourage all employers to participate in public consultations, as your views help influence and direct UK policy. You can respond either via an online response form on GOV.UK or via email agencywork@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

The consultation is open through to 1 May 2026.

REMINDER OF OTHER OPEN CONSULTATIONS

In our previous newsletters, we have shared details of other public consultations that remain open. As a reminder, and if you would like to participate, the following remain open:

Make Work Pay: improving access to flexible working

The reform in this area is aimed at shifting the focus of workplace discussions from why flexibility isn't possible to exploring creative solutions that benefit both staff and productivity. It is anticipated that this will be achieved by the introduction of a new legal 'reasonableness test' which will require employers to accept statutory flexible working requests that are 'reasonable and feasible'. You can respond online, or via email to flexibleworking@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Make Work Pay: strengthening the law on tipping

This consultation serves as a broader review of the existing statutory Code of Practice on the fair and transparent distribution of tips to identify where guidance can be improved for 'tipping industries'. Stakeholders, including business owners and payroll professionals, have until 1 April 2026 to provide feedback on the practical implementation of these new rules and the operation of existing legislation. The government expects to publish its final response and an updated Code of Practice later in 2026, with the new legal requirements and revised guidance currently scheduled to come into effect in October 2026. You can respond online, or via email to tipping@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Make Work Pay: recognition code of practice and e-balloting unfair practices

This updated guidance establishes a standard 15-working-day negotiation period for employers and unions to agree on how workers can be reached during a statutory application. You can respond online, or via email to tradeunionpolicy@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Make Work Pay: fire and rehire – changes to expenses, benefits and shift patterns

The Employment Rights Act 2025 will introduce major protections against 'fire and rehire' - the practice of firing staff to bring them back on worse terms. Under these rules, dismissing an employee to force changes to core terms (known as 'restricted variations') will be considered an automatic unfair dismissal. These restricted terms likely include pay, pensions, hours, and leave and a narrow exception may apply for businesses in severe financial distress, but the goal of the law will be to ensure changes are made through genuine negotiation rather than the threat of firing. The consultation closes 1 April 2026, and it specifically seeks the views on how these protections should apply to expenses, benefits-in-kind, and shift patterns. The government is currently 'minded to' exclude all expenses and benefits from the automatic unfair dismissal protections to ensure businesses retain the flexibility to update these policies as operational needs change. You can respond online, or via email to 'Fireandrehire@businessandtrade.gov.uk'.

KEY CONSULTATIONS WAITING FORMAL RESPONSE.

The following consultations are now closed. The relevant authorities are currently analysing the responses and will issue formal updates on next steps shortly. These findings will inform the development of future regulations and updated Codes of Practice.

- Extending the Right to Work Scheme
- Fair Pay Agreement process in adult social care
- Information commissioner – Consultation on draft complaints guidance for organisations
- Information commissioner – Consultation on draft recognised legitimate interest guidance
- Make Work Pay:
    - Call for evidence on unpaid internships
    - Draft Code of Practice on Electronic and Workplace Balloting for Statutory Union Ballots
    - Duty to inform workers of right to join a union
    - Enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers
    - Leave for bereavement including pregnancy loss.
    - Trade Union Right of Access
- Acas Consultation on draft Code of Practice on time off for trade union duties and activities
- Migration Advisory Committee launches stage 2 Review of Temporary Shortage List
- Parental leave and pay review - call for evidence
- Welsh Government: Draft disabled people's rights plan 225 to 2035
- Work and Pensions Inquiry: Employment support for disabled people
- Working in the UK - earned Settlement
- Working paper on options for reform of non-compete clauses in employment contracts.

GUIDANCE

UPDATED CODES OF PRACTICE ON INDUSTRIAL ACTION

In accordance with the Employment Rights Act 2025, the Government have updated and published the following two Codes of Practice that accompany the recently introduced reforms to this area of industrial relations.

Updated Code of Practice on industrial action ballots and notice to employers

This latest publication, available here, takes effect from 5 March 2026 and supersedes the previous version, issued in 2017.

Updated Code of Practice on Picketing

This latest publication, available here, takes effect from 5 March 2026 and supersedes the previous version, issued in 2024.

CASE RULINGS

HANDLING REDUNDANCY CONSULTATION PROCESSES CORRECTLY

Case: Micro Focus Ltd v Mildenhall

What happened

Mr. Mildenhall (the Claimant) was a high-performing employee in the sales division of Micro Focus Ltd. In late 2021, the company announced a large-scale reorganisation to cut costs. His line manager was then mandated to decide how to affect this cost saving and by November 2021, he and other managers created a detailed Excel spreadsheet to track their employees.

During a remote meeting in that same month, employees were shown the spreadsheet listing names alongside their proposed status: **Continued Employment**, **Redundancy**, or **Transfer**. Mr Mildenhall, at this early stage, was marked as **'in,'** meaning the company initially intended to keep him.

The situation shifted rapidly and in mid-January 2022 a decision was made behind closed doors to consolidate Mr. Mildenhall's team with another, led by Mr. De Nazareth, who had been given the leadership of the new combined team.

Mr. Mildenhall was subsequently dismissed for redundancy on July 29, 2022.

Claims

Mr. Mildenhall brought two primary claims to the Employment Tribunal (ET):

1. **Unfair Dismissal:** He argued the redundancy process was unfair because the company failed to consider a 'pool' for selection that included both him and Mr. De Nazareth, and that the consultation was a sham because the decision to dismiss him was pre-determined.
2. **Protective Award (Failure to Consult):** He claimed Micro Focus Ltd was in breach of Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULRCA) by failing to engage in collective consultation. He argued the company proposed to dismiss 20 or more employees within a 90-day period and failed to appoint representatives.

How the first ET ruled

The ET ruled in favour of Mr. Mildenhall on both counts:

- The redundancy process was pre-determined and lacked meaningful consultation, and
- Collective consultation obligations were triggered based on a rolling 90-day period, counting redundancies across the wider group.

Unfair dismissal

The unfair dismissal claim succeeded because the manager admitted he 'did not turn his mind' to creating a redundancy pool and consultation was inadequate because the outcome was pre-determined before the first formal meeting.

Collective consultation

The ET found the company breached s.188 TULRCA. This section requires employers that are proposing to dismiss as redundant 20 or more employees at one establishment within a period of 90 days or less must consult appropriate representatives of employees who may be affected by the proposed dismissals.

To reach the '20 or more' threshold, the ET relied on the *Marclean* case.

In this case, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that a 'rolling' 90-day window which looked both backwards and forwards was required to determine when collective consultation would be required. This implied that if you dismiss 10 people and then propose 10 more within 90 days, the total is 20, triggering the duty to consult.

Therefore, the ET in *Micro Focus Ltd v Mildenhall suggested* Micro Focus should have looked backwards and forwards 90 days to count redundancies and that Micro Focus Ltd should be treated as the 'de facto' employer for all UK staff in the group in order to meet the numbers.

Micro Focus Ltd appealed the ruling.

How the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) ruled

The EAT allowed the appeal in part, specifically overturning the collective consultation (s.188) findings while upholding the unfair dismissal ruling.

The EAT rejected the expansive 'rolling window' interpretation for the UK that had been determined in the *Marclean* case. The EAT said:

1. **Prospective Test:** The duty under Section 188 TULRCA remains a prospective one. It is based on what the employer is 'proposing' for the future at a specific point in time.
2. **Past dismissals don't count toward 'proposals':** You do not have to add already-completed dismissals to a new, current proposal to hit the 20-person threshold.
3. **Entity specificity:** The EAT confirmed that the 20-person threshold applies to the legal employer (the specific company that holds the contract), not the entire corporate group (the 'de facto' employer). S188 duties are owed only by the legal employer (the entity with the contract). The ET erred by aggregating employees from different legal entities within the corporate group just because they shared HR systems.

The EAT held the ET had misapplied the Cour of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) decision in Marclean when considering Micro Focus Ltd v Mildenhall. While European law (as the authority in the Marclean case) defines what constitutes 'collective redundancy' by looking at the actual outcome, UK law (Section 188 TULRCA) uses a different trigger focused on the employer's intent. Under this domestic rule, the duty to consult is a prospective test in that it depends entirely on the employer's subjective plans at the time they are 'proposing' future dismissals, rather than a retrospective count of past ones.

The EAT upheld the Unfair dismissal since the employer admitted they never even considered a pool, they could therefore not claim a 'pool of one' was a reasonable response.

Micro Ltd Focus therefore lost their appeal.

Key conclusion

The critical takeaway from this judgment is that Section 188 TULRCA (collective consultation) is a prospective obligation. This means, an employer's legal duty to consult is triggered when they *propose* to dismiss 20 or more people in the future. Courts cannot look backward to aggregate past dismissals with a current small-scale proposal to retrospectively trigger a duty to consult that didn't exist when the first proposal was made. Additionally, the duty is strictly tied to the legal employer, not the 'de facto' corporate group.

The decision is a win for employers, confirming that they do not need to 'look backward' to see if past redundancies trigger a collective consultation for a new, smaller proposal.

However, keeping clear records of when decisions were reached remain critical to prove that a second batch of redundancies was not envisioned when the first was proposed.

Practical HR Takeaways

- Define your redundancy pool properly – don't default to 'pool of one' without justification.
- Consult early and genuinely – avoid decisions that appear pre-determined.
- Track redundancy proposals in real time – focus on what is being proposed going forward.
- Keep entities separate – assess consultation thresholds per employing company.
- Train managers on consultation obligations and fair process.

Redundancy is one of the most challenging areas for any business owner or manager to navigate.

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYER'S CURRENT LEGAL OBLIGATION IN RESPECT OF PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

In preparing for changes ahead to UK sexual harassment laws, it is a good opportunity to understand current legal obligations.

The following case illustrates the necessity of having a workplace culture that is free from sexual harassment, understanding the impact sexual harassment has on individuals, the importance of dealing with grievances and promptly, and how vital it is to have adequate risk assessments, effective and well communicated anti-harassment policies, and training for staff and managers tailored to the context in which the business operates.

Case summary of Hunter v Lidl Great Britain Limited

In the case of Miss M. Hunter vs Lidl Great Britain Limited, Miss Hunter had been employed between February 2019 to July 2021, during which time, had been promoted from Customer Assistant to Shift Manager.

Throughout her employment, she had been subjected to persistent sexual harassment by a Deputy Store Manager and other male colleagues which involved inappropriate sexual remarks, comments regarding her appearance, and the existence of a 'ranking system' used by male staff to grade female employees' attractiveness.

She also endured frequent, unwanted physical contact, including being touched on her waist, thighs, and bottom, but despite her explicit requests for the behaviour to stop and multiple verbal and written complaints to management, her grievances were dismissed. She was also told to 'take it as a compliment.'

In addition to being subjected to sexual harassment, Miss Hunter identified a significant pay disparity, in which she was earning nearly £3,000 less than male counterparts in the same role over a six-month period. The company failed to rectify this issue and the 'final straw' occurred in June 2021 when Miss Hunter was disciplined for lateness despite her ongoing complaints; feeling she had no other choice, she resigned and filed a claim for constructive unfair dismissal.

The Employment Tribunal (ET) Verdict

The ET ruled that Lidl had 'closed their eyes and ears' to a pervasive culture of harassment, holding the company vicariously liable for the actions of its staff. The tribunal's findings established several critical failures:

- **Culture of harassment:** A store environment existed where unwanted touching and the 'ranking' of female staff by attractiveness went entirely unchecked.
- **Impact over intent:** The ET clarified that behaviour constitutes sexual harassment based on its impact on the victim, regardless of whether the perpetrators intended to cause offense.
- **Failure of 'reasonable steps':** Lidl's defence failed because it lacked adequate risk assessments, failed to follow its own anti-harassment policies, and provided insufficient training for staff and managers.
- **Constructive dismissal:** The cumulative effect of ignored grievances, being required to work excessive hours, and the mishandling of pay queries constituted a fundamental breach of contract, justifying Miss Hunter's resignation.

- **Equal pay:** The ET rejected Lidl's claim that a £3,000 pay discrepancy was a mere 'administrative error,' finding it to be a successful case of sex-based pay discrimination.

Miss Hunter was awarded **£50,884** in compensation after finding she was subjected to sexual harassment, sex discrimination and constructive dismissal.

Legal fallout and EHRC intervention

The case triggered a formal intervention by the **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)**. Lidl entered into a legally binding agreement to overhaul its internal culture, requiring the company to:

1. **Monitor & analyse:** Implement a robust system to track both formal and informal harassment complaints.
2. **Internal audits:** Conduct regular staff surveys to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment.
3. **Policy overhaul:** Review and update all harassment policies and training materials.
4. **E,D&I Integration:** Involve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion groups in formal risk assessments.

Key lessons for employers

The Hunter v. Lidl case serves as a vital reminder that policies alone are insufficient without active enforcement:

- **Impact is the standard:** Legal liability is determined by the effect of the conduct on the recipient; 'banter' or a lack of malicious intent is not a valid defence.
- **Act on informal reports:** Managers must be trained to recognise and investigate grievances even when raised verbally rather than through formal written channels.
- **The 'final straw' principle:** Ignoring ongoing complaints can make a minor, unrelated event (such as a performance discussion) the legal catalyst for a successful constructive dismissal claim.
- **Training must be active:** Anti-harassment policies are a liability if they are not supported by consistent training, enforcement, and a culture that refuses to dismiss inappropriate behaviour.

Changes under the Employment Rights Act 2025 (ERA25)

The **Employment Rights Act 2025 (ERA25)** introduces three critical shifts in UK harassment legislation designed to increase employer accountability:

- **Strengthened preventative duty (October 2026):** The current legal requirement for employers to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment will be elevated. Employers will instead be mandated to take **'all reasonable steps,'** significantly raising the bar for what constitutes an adequate legal defence.
- **Liability for 3rd party harassment (October 2026):** For the first time, workers will have a standalone legal avenue to bring claims against their employer for harassment committed by third parties (such as customers, clients, or contractors). This applies to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Expanded whistleblowing protections (April 2026):** UK whistleblowing legislation will be specifically broadened to include sexual harassment. This ensures that employees who report such conduct receive the full range of legal protections afforded to whistleblowers.

PAYROLL

CRITICAL REMINDERS FOR NEXT MONTH

Get ready for the updated statutory rates

The following statutory rates come into effect from April (family leave rates 5 April, SSP rate 6 April):

- Statutory paternity pay £187.18 per week £194.32 per week

- Statutory shared parental pay £187.18 per week£194.32 per week
- Statutory adoption pay £187.18 per week£194.32 per week
- Statutory parental bereavement pay £187.18 per week£194.32 per week
- Statutory neonatal care leave pay £187.18 per week£194.32 per week
- Statutory sick pay£118.75 per week £123.25 per week

New national minimum pay rates from 1 April 2026:

- New national minimum wage rates, to take effect on 1 April 2026:
- 21 years old and above - increases from £12.21 to £12.71 per hour
- 18–20-year-olds – increases from £10.00 to £10.85 per hour
- Apprentice under 18 years = £8.00 per hour
- Apprentice 19+ in first year = £8.00 per hour
- Apprentice 19+ in second year = the NMW for their age (£10.85 or £12.71 per hour)

New employee and employer class 1 rates and thresholds

HM Revenue and Customs have published a policy paper exploring the recently announced Autumn statement measures. The paper, titled 'Budget 2025 – Overview of tax and legislation and rates' also include confirmation of the 2026 to 2027 rates and allowances.

Income Tax bands of taxable income

- Basic rate = £1 to £37,700
- Higher rate = 37,701 to £125,140
- Additional rate = Over £125,140

Income tax rates

- Basic rate =20%
- Higher rate = 40%
- Additional rate = 45%

National insurance contributions: Employee and employer Class 1 rates and thresholds (£ per week)

- Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) increases from £125 to £129
- Primary Threshold (PT) remains at £242
- Secondary Threshold (ST) remains at £96
- Upper Earnings Limit (UEL) remains at £967
- Upper Secondary Threshold for under 21s remains at £967
- Apprentice Upper Secondary Threshold (AUST) for under 25s remains at £967
- Employment Allowance (per eligible employer) remains at £10,500 per year

Employee's (primary) Class 1 contribution rates (per cent)

- Below Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) - Not applicable
- Lower Earning Limit (LEL) to Primary Threshold (PT) remains at 0%
- Primary Threshold (PT) to Upper Earnings Limit (UEL) remains at 8%
- Above Upper Earnings Limit (UEL) remains at 2%

Employer's (secondary) Class 1 contribution rates

- Below Secondary Threshold (ST) remains at 0%
- Above Secondary Threshold (ST) remains at 15%

Employer's (secondary) Class 1 contribution rates for employees under 21

- Below Upper Secondary Threshold (UST) remains at 0%
- Above Upper Secondary Threshold (UST) remains at 15%

Employer's (secondary) Class 1 contribution rates for Apprentices under 25

- Below Apprentice Upper Secondary Threshold (AUST) remains at 0%
- Above Apprentice Upper Secondary Threshold (AUST) remains at 15%.

Social Security (Contributions) (Rates, Limits and Thresholds Amendments, National Insurance Funds Payments and Extension of Veteran's Relief) Regulations 2026

These Regulations, taking effect 6 April 2026, set the latest UK National Insurance rates, thresholds and limits for the 2026/28 tax year. They will:

- increase the small profits threshold which is the threshold over which Class 2 National Insurance contributions (NICs) are treated as paid from £6,845, to £7,105.
- increases the rate at which Class 2 NICs are payable by self-employed earners, from £3.50 to £3.65 per week
- increase the rate of voluntary Class 3 NICs, from £17.75 to £18.40
- maintain at the same level as the previous year, the weekly earnings limits and thresholds, which are used for determining liability to Class 1 NICs and entitlement to associated state benefits, except for the lower earnings limit, which is increased from £125 to £129
- extend zero-rate contributions for armed forces veterans to the 2026–27 and 2027–28 tax years

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SSP EMPLOYMENT REFORMS

The new Employment Rights Act 2025 introduces changes to how SSP is paid and calculated from 6 April 2026:

- The current 'waiting days' will be removed, meaning, statutory sick pay will be paid from the first day of sickness absence.
- There will be a new method for calculating SSP. The current lower earnings limit will be removed, meaning all employees will be eligible, regardless of how much they earn.

To calculate SSP, it will be either at 80% of the employees' normal weekly earnings, or the statutory flat rate (set to become £123.25 from April 6), whichever is the lowest.

We recently ran our webinar on the SSP reforms, which you can watch back on demand here, as well as access our webinar slides, and read our FAQ.

The Department for Work and Pensions have also published technical guidance on the transitional arrangements for introducing the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) reforms. We encourage that you read the guidance as it sets out practical examples of how to deal with the calculation of SSP in different scenarios. You will find the full guidance via the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals.

APRIL 2026 CHANGES AHEAD FOR WORKERS SUPPLIED VIA UMBRELLA COMPANIES

If your business engages workers supplied by umbrella companies, be sure you are prepared for changes that are expected April 2026.

Draft legislation, accompanied by explanatory notes was published recently in which the Finance Bill 2025-26 amends part 2 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 (known as ITEPA).

According to HMRC the legislation will:

'Introduce a new chapter 11 into part 2 to make employment agencies or end clients joint and severally liable for any amount required to be accounted for under the PAYE provisions where an umbrella company forms part of a labour supply chain.

Further legislation will be introduced to amend section 4A of Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act1992 to provide HM Treasury with the power to make regulations imposing an equivalent joint and several liability for NIC purposes.

Joint and several liability will allow HMRC to pursue an agency in the first instance for any payroll taxes that a non-compliant umbrella company fails to remit to HMRC on their behalf. The end client will be liable if contracting directly with an umbrella company.'

The legislation will not apply to those operating via limited companies that are inside IRS35, as well as those workers on an agency payroll (they already pay tax like an employee).

What it does mean, that if a business pays a worker providing a personal service through an umbrella company, and that company employs that worker, but the income tax and NI is not paid, then all parties in the chain would be held responsible.

APRIL 2027: MANDATORY PAYROLLING BENEFITS

A note for your diary – is the mandating of Payrolling Benefits in Kind (BIK), which has been delayed until April 2027. Mandating payrolling of BIK is the inclusion of the estimated value of non-cash employee benefits directly in the regular payroll instead of reporting separately on an annual P11D form. Until such time, it continues to be voluntary, and we expect draft legislation and guidance to be provided in due course.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

RACKING COLLAPSE

Two men died following a tragic incident involving the collapse of an industrial racking system at Castefields Industrial Estate in Bingley, West Yorkshire.

The racking system was being tested using heavy weights, while the two men were working in a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) beside the structure. When the racking began to collapse, it struck the MEWP, causing it to overturn and resulting in fatal injuries to both men.

Following an investigation, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that both companies had failed to properly assess the risks and implement safe systems of work. Workers had been positioned within the potential collapse zone of the structure during testing, exposing them to a foreseeable and significant risk.

The case went to Leeds Crown Court in February 2026 where Space Productiv Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and fined £97,500 with £17,377 in costs.

Collins Site Services Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £60,000 with £10,292 in costs.

The case highlights the critical importance of properly managing the design, installation, testing and ongoing inspection of racking systems.

UK Health and safety legislation requires employers to have in place suitable and sufficient risk assessments and implement safe systems of work as per Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Whilst the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) require work equipment, including racking systems, to be maintained in a safe condition and inspected where deterioration could create danger.

Both the HSE and the Storage Equipment Manufacturer's Association (SEMA) have produced detailed guidance and best practice on the practicalities of managing the lifecycle of racking in a way that minimise risk.

Further controls include:

- Only allowing competent persons to design, install, maintain and repair racking. A programme of installation training is run under SEIRS (Storage Equipment Installers Registration Scheme), which is run by SEMA.
- Fixing maximum load notices to racking.
- Where there is a risk of racking being struck by vehicles, it should be protected. For example, through the installation of upright protectors in a conspicuous colour.
- Appointment of a Person Responsible for Racking Safety (PRRS).
- Ensuring systems are in place for the immediate reporting of damage and defects.
- A programme of periodic visual inspections, which may be completed internally by competent persons. A programme of rack awareness training is run regularly by SEMA, which should provide sufficient knowledge to employees to allow them to undertake this visual inspection.
- In addition, a technically competent person (SEMA approved racking inspector) must carry out an expert inspection on an annual basis, supported by a written report.

HSE Guidance on racking can be found within HSG76.

VACCINATIONS

Figures regularly published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) show that cases of measles in England have been rising since the start of 2026. Since 1 January 2026, there have been a total of 158 laboratory-confirmed cases of measles reported in England, with 66% in London and 21% in the West Midlands.

In most office or low-risk environments, measles may present a relatively low workplace risk, but the risk may be higher where employees:

- Work closely with children or vulnerable people
- Work in healthcare or social care
- Work in education settings
- Have frequent public interaction

Employers should therefore review risk assessments where there is a credible risk of exposure.

One effective method for protecting against measles and other communicable disease may be vaccination, but as an employer can you force your employees to be vaccinated? The challenge is that employment policies which mandate vaccination could potentially lead to discrimination claims under the Equality Act 2010. For instance, an employee may not be able to receive the vaccination because of a protected characteristic that they hold which could include disability (physical and mental), pregnancy and maternity, or religious or philosophical beliefs.

For employers operating in high-risk sectors, such as health and social care, employers may justify stronger requirements where vaccination is considered a reasonable and proportionate control measure for when working with vulnerable people.

We advise seeking HR guidance if you think there is a risk for your business in this area and need to explore how to manage it in a proportionate way. Each case at tribunal is based on its own set of specific circumstances, but ultimately, the legal test at tribunal as to whether a policy is discriminatory (indirect discrimination as opposed to direct discrimination), is about whether the policy, criteria or practice (PCP) is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, i.e.:

1. **Legitimate Aim:** Is there a real, objective business need? (e.g., health and safety, operational efficiency). Reducing costs alone is rarely enough.
2. **Proportionate:** Is the rule necessary? If the employer could have achieved the same goal in a less discriminatory way (so what other way can you achieve your aim without mandating vaccination).

SAFER DRIVING INITIATIVES

The UK Government has recently launched its first major road safety strategy in over a decade, introducing a range of measures aimed at reducing deaths and serious injuries on Britain's roads. The strategy sets an ambitious target to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by 65% by 2035.

As part of the strategy the government will pilot a National Work-Related Road Safety Charter for businesses that require people to drive or ride for them. This includes the use of HGVs, Light Good Vehicles, cars, motorcycles, e-cycles and cycles. The aim is to reduce work-related road risk and improve safety for all road users. The pilot will run for two years and will be monitored and fully evaluated. Regulatory measures will be considered if voluntary engagement is insufficient in reducing work-related road risk.

Key measures as part of the wider Road Safety Strategy include:

- Lower drink-drive limits in England and Wales to align with Scotland and many European countries.
- Mandatory eyesight tests for drivers over 70 and possible cognitive testing to ensure fitness to drive.
- Stronger enforcement and penalties for offences such as seatbelt violations, uninsured driving and drug driving.
- Potential requirements for advanced safety technologies in vehicles, such as autonomous emergency braking.
- Improved training and monitoring of drivers, particularly young or inexperienced drivers.

Practical steps for businesses:

1. **Implement a driving on business policy and driver specific handbook**
   A formal policy should outline expectations for employees who drive on business, including safe driving standards, mobile phone rules, fatigue management and reporting of incidents. Alongside this, a specific handbook for those who drive on company business is also essential.
2. **Risk assessment**
   The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends focusing on three specific areas when carrying out a driver's risk assessment
   - The Driver's competency & health
   - Fitness to drive and
   - The journey
3. **Check driver competence**
   Employers should ensure all those who drive on company business hold a valid driving licence, are medically fit to drive and receive appropriate driver training where required. We recommend making it a process of reviewing an employee's driving licence on an annual basis.
4. **Manage vehicles and maintenance**
   Whether company vehicles or private vehicles used for work, employers should verify, MOT status, insurance for business use, regular servicing and safety checks.
   - **Use technology to improve safety**
     Fleet operators are increasingly using telematics and vehicle safety technologies to monitor driver behaviour and identify risks such as harsh braking or speeding.

5. **Plan safe journeys**
   Businesses should avoid practices that encourage unsafe driving, such as:
   - Unrealistic delivery schedules
   - Excessive working hours
   - Pressure to speed

With the government placing greater emphasis on road safety, work-related driving is likely to receive increased scrutiny from regulators, insurers and courts.

For many organisations, particularly those with fleets or mobile workers, reviewing occupational road risk policies now will help ensure compliance with health and safety law while protecting employees and the public.

INTERESTING HR STATISTICS

LABOUR MARKET OVERVIEW: MARCH 2026

The latest employment data published by the Office for National Statistics, published 19 March 2026, presents a mixed picture of the UK labour market, with some indicators showing growth while others suggest a plateau or decline compared to pre-pandemic levels.

- **Employment and payrolled employees:** The number of payrolled employees saw a slight increase in recent months, though the overall trend is described as broadly flat. While the employment rate has risen over the latest quarter and year, it remains below the rates seen before the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Unemployment:** The jobless rate remains at a near five-year high of **5.2%**. Youth unemployment (ages 18–24) has surged to **14.5%**, the highest since 2015.
- **Falling Vacancies:** Job vacancies dropped by 6,000 to a total of 721,000, signalling that employers are becoming more cautious with hiring.
- **Technological Shift:** increased employment costs are driving firms to pivot toward AI and automation to manage workloads rather than increasing headcount.
- **Unemployment and inactivity:** The unemployment rate has increased both quarterly and annually, remaining above pre-pandemic levels. Conversely, the economic inactivity rate has decreased on the quarter and the year, but it also remains higher than it was before the pandemic.
- **Job vacancies:** There were 721,000 job vacancies in the period from December 2025 to February 2026. This reflects a slight quarterly decrease of 6,000 and a significant annual decline of 76,000.
- **Earnings growth:** In real terms (adjusted for inflation via CPIH), annual growth for the period of November 2025 to January 2026 was 0.4% for regular pay and 0.5% for total pay. While total pay growth remained unchanged, the real annual growth rate for regular pay was lower than the previous period. Regular earnings growth (excluding bonuses) fell to **3.8%** in the three months to January 2026. This is a sharp decline from 4.2% in the previous period and represents the lowest level since November 2020.
- **Inflation Impact:** While pay is still rising, it is only just outpacing the cost of living. When adjusted for Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation, real earnings growth stands at a marginal 0.5%.
- **Sector divergence:** Pay growth is easing in both the private and public sectors, though the private sector has seen a more notable slowdown to roughly 3.6%—a five-year low for that segment.

Labor Market Pressures

The ‘slowdown’ is occurring against a backdrop of geopolitical instability, specifically the Iran-Israel conflict and subsequent oil price shocks.

Experts warn that if energy prices continue to mirror the 2022 spikes, unemployment could trend toward 6%, potentially pushing the UK into a recession.

Despite falling wage growth, the threat of energy-driven inflation is expected to force the Bank of England to keep interest rates on hold at 3.75% for a prolonged period.

SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN WHAT CANDIDATES WANT WHEN LOOKING FOR JOBS

A new survey highlights a significant shift in what job applicants want when it comes for what to look for in job adverts – and according to the latest research (Totaljobs Salary Trends Report 2026), the majority of UK jobseekers actively avoid job advertisements that fail to disclose salary details.

The Key Findings:

- **The Transparency threshold:** Approximately 80% of candidates say they are unlikely to apply for a role if the salary or a pay range is not listed.
- **A 'deal-breaker' for diversity:** Transparency is even more critical for reaching diverse talent pools. The survey found that women (81%), candidates with a disability (81%), and Black candidates (87%) are significantly less likely to engage with 'blind' ads compared to the national average.
- **The 'competitive' turn-off:** Terms like 'competitive salary' are increasingly viewed with scepticism. Over a quarter of jobseekers (26%) say this specific phrasing puts them off applying, fearing it is a mask for lower-than-market pay.

Why this research matters

While 62% of hiring managers mistakenly believe that withholding salary information has no negative impact, the data suggests otherwise. Employers who *do* list salaries report:

1. **More Applications:** Ads with salary details receive an average of 27% more applications.
2. **Higher Quality:** Recruiters noted improved candidate 'relevancy,' as applicants can self-select based on their financial needs.
3. **Efficiency:** Showing pay ranges saves significant time by weeding out salary-mismatched candidates before the interview stage.

The bottom line:

In a cooling labour market where job security is rising in importance, candidates are treating salary transparency as a baseline indicator of a company's integrity. For businesses struggling to fill roles, the simplest fix may not be a bigger budget, but a more transparent job advert.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

35% OF WORKERS THINK THEIR EMPLOYER IS INEFFECTIVE AT SUPPORTING NEURODIVERSITY

Recent insight from Acas highlights a persistent gap between awareness of neurodiversity and meaningful support in the workplace. With 35% of respondents reporting, they think that their employer is ineffective at training managers in this area (YouGov poll of 1,000 employees).

Acas Head of Inclusive Workplace Strategy and Policy commented:

'These stats show a potentially worrying lack of knowledge when it comes to supporting neurodivergent colleagues, and how to put support at the centre of workplace policies and training.

'Supporting neurodivergent staff can be simple and cost-effective, and it should be integral to any business. When everyone is given the chance to thrive, every business can too.'

While many employers recognise the concept, far fewer are translating this into effective day-to-day management practices. A key issue appears to be confidence and capability at management level. Many line managers' report uncertainty around how to have conversations about neurodivergence or what adjustments may be appropriate. At the same time, employees are often reluctant to disclose their needs, creating a cycle where support is neither requested nor offered.

The result is that neurodivergent employees may not be receiving the adjustments they need to perform at their best—even though, in many cases, these changes are straightforward and low cost.

Importantly, employers should remember that neurodivergence can fall within the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010, meaning there is a legal obligation to consider and put in place reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

How can your workplace provide greater support?

- **Awareness alone is not enough** – organisations need to equip managers with practical skills, not just general understanding.
- **Don't wait for disclosure** – creating inclusive environments benefits all employees, including those who may not formally identify as neurodivergent.
- **Focus on simple adjustments** – small changes to working patterns, communication styles or environments can have a significant impact.
- **Be mindful of legal risk** – failing to make reasonable adjustments could amount to disability discrimination.

Practical Takeaway

For managers, the priority should be building confidence: having open, supportive conversations, understanding individual needs, and being prepared to adapt working practices. Organisations that get this right are more likely to unlock the strengths of neurodiverse talent and avoid unnecessary employee relations risk.

ARE YOU TAKING THE PROACTIVE STEP BY INTRODUCING MENOPAUSE ACTION PLANS NEXT MONTH?

Did you know, from next month, the Employment Rights Act 2025 introduces voluntary **menopause action plans** for organisations with 250+ employees. While the legislation focuses on larger firms, we recommend that employers of all sizes adopt these plans to better support their workforce.

Line managers play a vital role in helping their employee to manage their menopause symptoms in the workplace. They play a vital role in helping to ensure performance is maintained, absenteeism is minimised, symptoms are managed safely and that the individual is treated with dignity and respect. An action plan facilitates all of this, along with a risk assessment.

Further, all employers have a legal duty to look after the health and wellbeing of their employees and if the menopause is not managed appropriately in the workplace, it can bring legal issues as there are several areas of employment law that are relevant – Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010.

Aside from the legal requirement, it is also morally right that support is made available and provided to those who may be struggling. Afterall, it is well established that employers who foster a culture of wellbeing and who support individual employees with such circumstances, develop a workforce which is more engaged, committed and productive