

## “Nothing to fear” from the Employment Rights Bill say leading experts, including employers

2 months ago



On Tuesday 11 November, the day new data showed unemployment rising to 5%, the highest for a decade outside the pandemic, the [Policy Liaison Group on Workplace Wellbeing](#) convened employers, among other key stakeholders, at a roundtable in Parliament to discuss how the Employment Rights Bill can shape a fairer and more productive labour market.

The roundtable, attended by Labour MP Katrina Murray, agreed that the Bill represents a long-overdue correction to the UK's patchwork of employment law, one that balances fairness and flexibility and makes the workplace more attractive at a time when almost a million young people are not in education, employment or training.

While often portrayed as onerous for business, there was clear consensus among participants that there is “nothing to fear” from the Bill. The reforms it introduces, such as day-one rights against unfair dismissal, stronger sick and parental leave, and protection from harassment, are already standard practice among responsible employers. The real challenge for business lies in implementation: adapting HR and payroll systems to reflect a changing employment regime. However, this is mitigated by a staged, sector-by-sector rollout that allows organisations time to adjust, a feature widely welcomed as evidence of a measured, collaborative approach to employment reform.

The new nine-month statutory probationary period was described as a reasonable balance between worker protection and employer flexibility, bringing the UK closer to the norms of international peers. Participants agreed that clarity and confidence in employment law, together with stronger protections, support

recruitment, retention and wellbeing, helping to reduce sickness absence and improve productivity. As one attendee noted, “good work is good business”.

Gethin Nadin (pictured), Chair, Policy Liaison Group on Workplace Wellbeing, said: “Rising unemployment makes collaboration between employers and government essential. This Bill builds confidence by setting clear expectations and rewarding those who lead by example. Good employers have nothing to fear from good work, and every employer stands to gain from creating safer, fairer workplaces.”

“I’d encourage employers to look at the Bill objectively and discuss its implications with peers and through forums like the Policy Liaison Group — increasing understanding in this way will help ensure the actual contents of the Bill are understood, easing some of the unnecessary concern that has surrounded it.”

Abigail Vaughan, CEO, Zellis, said: “The key test now is implementation and reviewing the opportunity to simplify the cumulative impacts of many different pieces of legislation, particularly in areas like maternity and parental leave. Simplifying these areas would help reduce honest mistakes, protect vulnerable workers, and limit confusion for employees.”

Janet Williamson, Head of Corporate Governance and Collective Bargaining, Trades Union Congress (TUC), said: “The Employment Rights Bill will help the UK catch up with other leading economies whose workplace standards have evolved faster. It will strengthen vital protections for workers while creating a more consistent and transparent framework for businesses.

“For employers, the long-term benefits are clear: lower staff turnover, reduced absenteeism, higher morale, and stronger productivity. When people have fair, secure and predictable work, organisations perform better.”