

New Acas Survey on the Employment Rights Act Reveals that Sick Pay Changes Will Have Biggest Impact at Work

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Workplace expert, [Acas](#), commissioned YouGov to ask which changes in the Employment Rights Act 2025 will have the biggest impact on bosses and workers.

New rights on sick pay topped the polls for both, followed by new protections on unfair dismissals. Employers ranked new paternity leave rights as their third biggest while workers opted for the new changes on flexible working.

The valuable insights gained from the results will help Acas target its support for workers and bosses where they need it the most.

Niall Mackenzie, Acas Chief Executive, said: “It is clear from our polls that new worker rights on sick pay and protections from being unfairly dismissed from work are at the forefront in the minds of employers and workers.

“Acas will play a crucial role working with employers, workers and their representatives on the implementation of the Employment Rights Act and updating its advice and training.

“These reforms represent the biggest shake-up to employment law in a generation. Acas remain best placed as independent experts helping everyone at work throughout this period of change.”

The survey results revealed that:

- 43% of employers said that workers getting sick pay for the first day of illness, rather than the fourth day, would have the biggest impact on them. 36% of workers also listed it as their biggest impact too.
- Workers being protected from unfair dismissal after 6 months in a job, instead of 2 years, was the second most-commonly chosen reform with 31% of employers and 30% of employees selecting this.
- For employers, rights for paternity leave from the first day of employment was their third-most important reform (28%), while workers said making it easier to get flexible working arrangements at work (28%) was theirs.

New rules, brought in by the Employment Rights Act, regarding paternity leave and sick pay will come into force on 6 April 2026.

From 6 April 2026, employees will be eligible for paternity leave from the first day of employment. Currently, employees must have worked for their employer for 26 weeks before they are eligible.

From 1 January 2027, employees will be protected from unfair dismissal if they have worked for their employer for at least 6 months. Currently, an employee must have 2 years continuous service to be able to claim unfair dismissal.

A dismissal may be considered unfair by law if:

- there was no fair reason for the dismissal
- the reason was not enough to justify dismissing them
- the employer did not follow a fair procedure

In 2027 new measures will come into force intended to improve access to flexible working.

Flexible working can involve a change to when, where or how someone works. Employers and employees should follow the [Acas Code of Practice on flexible working](#) when handling a request.

Acas has an online roadmap of when all the new expected law changes in the Employment Rights Act are likely to come into effect, which includes webinars and training. [Read the Employment Rights Act roadmap.](#)