

Key Employment Rights Changes Affecting Employers of Migrant and Refugee Workers (Chronological Order)

What rights are affected	From when they are enforceable	What the Government says about the changes/what it means for you	Further Information and Guidance
Industrial action protection: workers taking part in lawful industrial action protected from unfair dismissal from day 1	18 February 2026	Removes the previous 12-week limit. Workers can participate in lawful industrial action from their first day of employment. This is meant to remove the risk of dismissal based on participation in such action.	Official guidance: UK Government – Protection from Detriments for Taking Industrial Action (Options Assessment) . Practical guidance: TUC – Your Guide to New Employment Rights 2026 .
Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)	6 April 2026	SSP becomes a day-one right, and the lower earnings threshold is removed. This is particularly relevant in low-paid sectors where workers may previously have continued working while ill because they could not afford unpaid waiting days.	Official guidance: UK Government – Statutory Sick Pay Changes Guidance .
Whistleblowing protection: sexual harassment becomes a protected disclosure	6 April 2026	Workers who report sexual harassment gain whistleblowing protection from dismissal or other forms of detriment.	Official guidance: UK Government – Strengthening Protections for Whistleblowers Factsheet .

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			Practical guidance: CIPD – Bullying and Harassment at Work.
Day 1 parental leave rights	6 April 2026	Eligibility for paternity leave and unpaid parental leave begins from the first day of employment, removing previous qualifying periods.	Official guidance: Acas – Time Off for Care and Support. Further reading: CERIC Blog – Parental Leave Reform and Small and Medium Businesses.
Union recognition: simpler process for unions to gain recognition	7 April 2026	Trade unions face fewer procedural barriers to obtaining statutory recognition and collective bargaining rights.	Practical guidance: TUC – Your Guide to New Employment Rights 2026. Official guidance: Acas – Trade Union and Employee Representation Guidance. Further reading Time to work constructively with trade unions-Acas
Establishment of a new Fair Work Agency	7 April 2026	Creates a single labour market enforcement body with broader powers to investigate workplace breaches, recover underpayments and enforce employment rights.	Official guidance: UK Government – Fair Work Agency Factsheet. Further reading: Work Rights Centre – Commentary on the Fair Work Agency and Migrant Workers' Rights.

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Gender pay gap and menopause action plans (voluntary phase)	June 2026	Large employers (250+ employees) are encouraged to develop and publish action plans linked to gender pay gap reporting and menopause support.	Official guidance: UK Government – Action Plans: List of Actions. Further reading: –Some of the examples from the GOV. UK page include inclusive workplace and recruitment practices. –The Fawcett Society Equality Action Plans What you need to know
Tipping reforms	1 October 2026	Employers must consult workers or recognised trade unions on written policies governing the allocation of tips and review these policies regularly. Particularly relevant in hospitality and other customer-facing sectors.	Official guidance: UK Government – Statutory Code of Practice on Fair Distribution of Tips. Practical guidance: Birketts – Employment Rights Act 2025: Tipping Reforms. Further reading: CIPD – Reward Factsheet.
Fire and Rehire	January 2027	Dismissing workers and rehiring them on less favourable contractual terms becomes automatically unfair in most circumstances.	Practical guidance: Institute of Employment Rights – Guidance on Dismissal and Re-engagement. Further reading: Institute of Employment Rights commentary on remaining loopholes;

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			TUC analysis of fire-and-rehire reforms .
Flexible working	2027	Employers must provide stronger justification when refusing flexible working requests and explain why the refusal is reasonable.	Official guidance: Acas Code of Practice on Flexible Working Requests . Official guidance: UK Government – Flexible Working Factsheet .
Zero-hours contracts and agency workers	2027	Workers gain rights to guaranteed hours, compensation for cancelled shifts, and reasonable notice of work schedules. These provisions also apply to many agency workers and workers on low-hours contracts.	Official guidance: UK Government Consultation – Ending One-Sided Flexibility . Make Work Pay: ending one-sided flexibility – reforms of zero hours and similar contracts – GOV.UK Further reading: A Range of Reasonable Responses – Employment Law Resource.
Ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting	Expected by 2029	Mandatory reporting for large employers is expected following consultation and the implementation of supporting regulations and guidance. Employers of migrant ethnic minorities and disabled migrants	Official guidance: UK Government Response to the Consultation on Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Reporting .

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		may be impacted by these measures. This government proposal is under consultation and one to watch for future developments.	Further reading: Equality and Human Rights Commission Response to the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill . TUC position Equality (Race and Disability Bill)
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