

Personnel Committee

12 March 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Update on the Implementation of the Employment Rights Act 2025
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director Resources
Report author	Kathryn Cook, Director HR&OD
Lead Councillor	Councillor Ellie Emberson
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	1. That Personnel Committee notes the implementation plan for the provisions of the Employment Rights Act

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Employment Rights Act became law on 18 December 2025. The Act will progressively introduce additions and amendments to existing legislation, including the Employment Rights Act 1996. The employment law changes included in the Act will happen in 2026 and 2027.
- 1.2. The provisions in the Act will impact on a number of current HR policies and these will be revised as set out in the Act. Not all of the provisions in the Act will apply to RBC.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 It is essential that RBCs HR policies are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet current legal obligations. The changes required by the Employment Rights Act 2025 will impact on a number of HR policies over the period 2026-2027 and a schedule has been produced to ensure changes are made to our policies in a timely way. Please note that as the changes in the Act are required by law, they will not track to Personnel Committee for individual approval but policies will be brought for information as they are amended with clear information about what has changed.
- 2.2 In many areas where changes are proposed, Reading already has provisions to protect and support our employees in these areas and our policies often already offer more than is legally required. However a careful review will be undertaken in line with legislation.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. A headline summary of the anticipated provisions of the Act and the amendments required to be made to RBC policies by the Council is at Appendix 1. A single 'master-tracker' has been developed to ensure the timely amendment of policies and this will be actively reviewed to ensure compliance and management of risk.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 The proposals in the policy review schedule will ensure RBC is legally compliant with the Employment Rights Act 2025. These policy changes will therefore contribute to the strategic aim to Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. Not applicable to this report.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Not applicable to this report

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Not applicable to this report – the Council’s HR policies require amendment to meet the requirements of recent legislation.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. None.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The proposals will ensure that RBC is compliant with the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 2025.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 As policies are reviewed, any financial implications will be assessed and highlighted to Finance colleagues as appropriate.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. See Appendix 1

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. Summary of the provisions of the Employment Rights Act and delivery timescales

Employment Rights Act –Headline schedule of changes

NB – where provisions are not expected to impact RBC, they have NOT been included in the table below. The impact of some changes is not yet known.

Phase	Key Changes	Policies impacted:
Phase 1 – Apr 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Sick Pay changes including SSP to be paid from the first day of illness, instead of the fourth day; the lower earnings limit will be removed – currently, workers must earn a minimum amount to be eligible for statutory sick pay Paternity rights including day one rights Unpaid Parental; Pregnancy/Maternity protections; Various measures related to trade unions including an increase to the length of industrial action mandates, changes to notification requirements, ballots etc Whistleblowing protections for sexual harassment 	<p>Sickness Absence policy and Sick Pay entitlement;</p> <p>Family Leave - Pregnancy/Maternity;</p> <p>Trade Union policies</p> <p>Whistleblowing</p>
Phase 2 – Oct 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duty to prevent harassment including sexual harassment; Fire-and-rehire restrictions subject to secondary legislation Additional trade union rights including an updated Code of Practice on trade union recognition Public sector outsourcing – implications for terms and conditions Introduction of the new Adult Social Care Negotiating Body 	<p>Update Bullying & Harassment Policy; Zero Tolerance Policy</p> <p>Contracts; Grievance & Disciplinary Policies, Employment Stability Agreement</p> <p>Trade union policies</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>

**Phase 3 – Jan
2027+**

- Six-month unfair dismissal (from Jul 2026 hires);
- Bereavement leave;
- Flexible working – clarity about reasons for refusal;
- Zero-hours and low hours contracts;
- Gender pay gap & menopause plans
- Increased pregnancy and maternity rights
- Sexual Harassment - further measures

- Menopause action plans
- Changes to collective redundancy rules
- Trade Unions – further changes including electronic voting

- Introduction of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) for school support staff

Update Dismissal (affects Employee Stability Agreement);
Bereavement/Compassionate leave;
Flexible Working; Zero-hours/Casual contract

Pay Policy
Parental policies
Update Bullying & Harassment Policy;
Zero tolerance policy

TBC
Employment Stability Agreement
Trade unions

TBC