

# PSsssst!



## The 1 July countdown: are you ready for 6- month dismissal rights?

If you're hiring right now, there's a date you need to have on your radar. Anyone you hire on or before 1 July 2026 will gain unfair dismissal protection on 1 January 2027. Anyone hired after that date will gain it once they've been with you for 6 months.

### Why this date matters:

The qualifying unfair dismissal period is dropping massively from 2 years to 6 months. It changes how you need to think about every hire you make from now on.

Under the current rules, most employers treat the first 2 years as a low-risk window. If someone isn't working out, you move them on relatively informally.

With the new rules, if your probation process still relies on a single review meeting at the 5-month mark, that's too late.

There's another detail that catches people out. When a tribunal calculates length of service, it includes the statutory notice period. So, an employee dismissed just short of 6 months could still qualify if their notice period takes them over the line.

### Here's what we'd suggest doing now:

#### Shorten your probation period to 3 months

With an option to extend by 1 month if needed. That gives you time to assess someone properly and make a decision before the 6-month clock runs out.

#### Build structure into how you manage new starters

Regular check-ins from week 1. Clear expectations documented early. Honest feedback given often, not saved up for a formal review.

And the compensation cap for unfair dismissal? That's being removed too. There's no upper limit on what a tribunal can award from January 2027.

### Tighten up your probation processes now

We can help you to review what you've got and build something that works before the new rules kick in.

### LATEST NEWS

## Millions of workers are juggling jobs with unpaid care and employers are losing them

Around five million people in the UK are balancing paid work with unpaid caring responsibilities for a family member or friend. According to Carers UK, roughly 600 people a day leave work because they can't manage both.

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 gives employees the right to 5 days of unpaid leave for caring, but more than half of working carers say they can't afford to take it.

For small businesses, this often shows up as rising absence, reduced availability or an unexpected resignation from an experienced team member. If you have staff with caring responsibilities, it's worth knowing what support you're required to offer and whether a more flexible approach could help you to keep them.



# Men's health at work: what employers are getting wrong

**Men's Health Week is from 15–21 June, and it's worth asking yourself a question. When was the last time one of your male employees told you they were struggling?**

If the answer is never, that doesn't mean everything is fine.

The issues we commonly see surrounding men's health:

## **Men account for around 75% of UK suicides**

In construction alone, around 700 workers take their own lives every year. And, statistically, male employees are less likely to talk about mental health and seek support.

HR has rightly focused on women's health in recent years

Menopause policies and maternal mental health have been getting the attention they needed. Men's health hasn't had the same focus and the gap is showing.

## **Problems can go unnoticed**

Especially in a small team with no EAP and no managers trained to spot the signs.

## **Ultimately, this costs you money**

Unmanaged mental health drives absence and disengaged employees are less productive. Replacing someone who leaves unexpectedly can be very expensive.

## **The solution?**

Start with regular one-to-ones that go beyond task management. Train managers to notice changes in behaviour. Keep overtime in check. Signpost free resources like Mind, Samaritans or CALM where an EAP isn't affordable.

## **Use Men's Health Week to open the conversation, but don't let it be a one-off.**

If you'd like help with thinking about what wellbeing support looks like in a small business, get in touch.

## LATEST NEWS

### **Employment tribunal claims are surging**

The latest government statistics show that single employment tribunal claims increased by 54% in the final quarter of 2025 compared to the same period the year before. The open caseload for single claims has reached its highest level since 2012/13, up 49% year on year.

For small business owners, the message is straightforward. More employees are bringing claims and the system is under pressure. Getting your processes right before a problem reaches that stage has never been more important. Good documentation, fair procedures and early intervention are your best protection.

### **Government offers employers up to £3,000 to hire young workers**

The government has launched a Youth Jobs Grant offering businesses £3,000 for each unemployed 18 to 24 year old they hire, provided that the candidate has been out of work for at least 6 months. Small employers can also access an additional £2,000 for each new apprentice aged 16 to 24.

With nearly a million young people currently out of education, employment or training, the scheme is designed to help businesses to access a wider talent pool while receiving financial support for onboarding. If you're planning to recruit, it's worth checking whether you qualify.

# Your top HR questions

**Can I dismiss someone during their probation period under the new rules?**

Yes, but the rules are changing. From 1 January 2027, employees will gain unfair dismissal rights after 6 months rather than 2 years. If someone is still in their probation period when they hit that 6-month mark, you'll need a fair reason and a fair process to dismiss them. Review your probation periods now and make sure that any concerns are raised well before the 6-month point.

**Do I have to let an employee attend medical appointments during work hours?**

There's no general legal right to paid time off for routine medical appointments, unless it relates to antenatal care or a disability-related adjustment. However, being inflexible about medical appointments can lead to problems down the line, including potential discrimination claims if the appointments are linked to a disability or long-term condition. A reasonable, clear policy is your best approach.

**One of my employees has asked to reduce their hours to care for a parent. What are my obligations?**

Any employee has the right to make a flexible working request from day 1 and you must deal with it in a reasonable manner. You can refuse a request, but only for one of the 8 business reasons set out in law. You should also be aware that carers now have a right to 1 week of unpaid carer's leave per year under the Carer's Leave Act 2023. Consider the request carefully and document your decision.

## Let's talk on the phone

**Here are three questions for you:**

- Do you currently have a HR consultant?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you with them?
- If the answer isn't "I'm so delighted I could print 1,000 flyers to spread the word about them", let's jump on a video call

You know just how important it is to get proactive, responsive HR support. That's what we do. And we're taking on new clients.



Set up a 15 minute exploratory call at [www.pshumanresources.co.uk](http://www.pshumanresources.co.uk)



**YOUR HR EXPERT:  
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