



UK EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE 2025–2026: IMPLICATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH & SPECIALIST RECRUITMENT

PURPOSE

To equip Corvus People employees, clients, and partners with a practical, up-to-date view of UK employment law changes, and their impact on talent acquisition, executive search, and specialist recruitment strategies.

KEY CHANGES ALREADY IN EFFECT (2025)

1. National Minimum / Living Wage Increases

- Effective 1 April 2025
- NLW (21+) rises to £12.21/hr; 18–20 yr rate £10.00; 16–17 & apprentices £7.55
- Recruitment impact: Update salary benchmarks; ensure competitive offers for entry-level and specialist roles

2. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

- Effective 6 April 2025
- SSP rises to £118.75/week; lower earnings threshold £125
- Recruitment impact: Consider SSP in candidate packages and retention planning

3. Fire & Rehire / Protective Awards

- Effective 20 January 2025
- Tribunals can uplift protective awards by up to 25% if consultation code is ignored
- Recruitment impact: Candidates may be cautious about employers with poor reputations; affects employer brand

4. Whistleblowing: Sanctions Disclosures

- Effective 26 June 2025
- Protection extended to reporting breaches of UK trade sanctions
- Recruitment impact: Organisations with strong transparency culture are more attractive to talent

5. Neonatal Care Leave

- From April 2025
- Right to statutory leave for employees whose newborn requires neonatal care
- Recruitment impact: Flexible leave policies help attract and retain top candidates

UPCOMING / PROPOSED REFORMS (2025–2027)

Employment Rights Bill – Day One Rights

- Expected Autumn 2025 / April 2026
- Parental, bereavement, and other leave may be available from day one; fire & rehire restrictions; protections for zero-hours workers
- Recruitment impact: Candidates value organisations offering inclusive policies; EVP messaging should reflect new rights

NDA – Harassment & Discrimination

- Likely 2026
- NDAs that silence harassment/discrimination claims would be void
- Recruitment impact: Transparency strengthens employer brand; important for vetting sensitive roles

Guaranteed Hours for Agency / Zero-Hours Contracts

- From ERB regulations
- Contracts must reflect actual hours; protection against last-minute cancellations
- Recruitment impact: Ensures stability for contingent talent; recruiters can advise clients on fair contracts

Higher Tribunal & Protective Awards

- Post-ERB
- Compensatory and redundancy awards may increase
- Recruitment impact: Candidates may prefer employers with strong compliance record

Fair Work Agency (FWA)

- Likely 2026
- Regulatory oversight of employment rights
- Recruitment impact: Organisations with strong compliance culture are more attractive to senior hires

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR RECRUITMENT TEAMS

1. Align Employer Value Proposition (EVP) with Legal Changes

- Highlight competitive salaries and benefits
- Promote progressive leave policies
- Emphasise compliance and transparent reporting

2. Advise Clients on Risk & Reputation

- Ensure contracts and policies are compliant
- Educate clients on fire & rehire risks
- Include employer brand advisory in pitches

3. Candidate Assessment & Advisory

- Be aware of candidate concerns about zero-hours or unstable arrangements
- Advise executives on protections under day-one rights and whistleblowing expansions
- Highlight employers with strong compliance as attractive

4. Recruitment Strategy Adaptation

- Adjust salary benchmarks and benefits packages in line with law changes
- Identify flexible talent pools and contingency strategies
- Use legislative trends for market intelligence and talent mapping

Navigating the evolving landscape of UK employment law is critical for organisations looking to attract and retain top executive and specialist talent. By understanding the key legal changes ranging from wage increases and guaranteed hours to day-one rights and whistleblowing protections recruiters and clients can make informed decisions that strengthen employer brand, mitigate risk, and enhance candidate experience. Proactively aligning policies, contracts, and recruitment strategies with these developments ensures your organisation remains competitive, compliant, and trusted by the talent you seek to engage. At Corvus People, we are committed to guiding both clients and candidates through these changes, helping to create workplaces that are fair, resilient, and future-ready.