



Kingston VCSE HR Training Programme - Module 1

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21ST APRIL 2026

Our programme

Module 1 – 21st April

HR and
Employment
Law Essentials

Module 2 – 28th April

Recruitment,
onboarding,
culture and
wellbeing

Module 3 – 21st May

Performance
management
and difficult
conversations

Module 4 – 2nd June

Policies,
procedures, HR
systems and
problem solving

The session today

- ▶ **Purpose:** To deliver a workshop giving an overview of employment law, what is changing and what you need to be aware of, as well as the role of employee relations
- ▶ **Process:** To deliver an interactive workshop with time for discussion and self-reflection
- ▶ **Payoff:** A cohort of delegates with an increased awareness and confidence of this topic

CIPD research – 5 behavioural areas

Being open, fair
and consistent

Handling
conflict and
problems

Providing
knowledge,
clarity and
guidance

Building and
sustaining
relationships

Supporting
development

Employment Law – April 2026 and beyond

The UK Employment Rights Act received Royal Assent in Parliament on 18 December 2025.

The Employment Rights Act 2025 is the biggest piece of employment law in a generation and will bring in over 28 changes over the next two years.....

Unfair dismissal – January 2027

- ▶ From 1 January 2027, qualifying service for unfair dismissal will be reduced from two years to six months.
- ▶ Any employee who has six months' service by 1 January 2027 will be able to make a claim of unfair dismissal, instead of having to wait for two years. The implementation of this is unusual as it is retrospective and so employees who began their employment after early 2025 will get unfair dismissal protection sooner than was expected when their employment started.

Employers now need to:

- ▶ Ensure their recruitment processes are robust, as making the right choice on who to employ will be more important than ever
- ▶ Refine their probationary processes to give new starters the best start in the organisation and quickly identify those employees who are not suitable
- ▶ Review the length of their probationary period — a six-month probation period will give little room to end employment via a failed probation.

Sick pay – April 2026

- ▶ Employees will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the first day of absence from April 2026 (instead of day four) and from then even those earning below the lower earnings limit will be entitled to some form of SSP

Employers will need to:

- ▶ Increase their efforts to prevent sickness absence
- ▶ Ensure their absence management processes are as robust as possible in dealing with both short and long-term absences, as absences will become more costly to the business.

Family friendly policies – April 2026

- ▶ Paternity leave and parental leave will become a day-one right.
- ▶ This means that employees will no longer need to attain a minimum amount of service to take this time off.
- ▶ Policies may need to be adjusted and managers will need to be aware of the change to ensure that no employee is unlawfully denied their right to these types of leave.

October 2026

Several other changes will come into effect in October 2026:

- ▶ Employers will be required to provide a written statement to employees to inform them they have a right to join a trade union
- ▶ Employers will be required to take “all reasonable steps” to prevent sexual harassment of their employees
- ▶ There will be an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties

October 2026

Other measures that will take effect in October 2026 include:

- ▶ Restrictions on using dismissal and re-engagement to change employee terms and conditions
- ▶ Bringing forward regulations to establish the Fair Pay Agreement Adult Social Care Negotiating Body
- ▶ Tightening the tipping law
- ▶ Strengthening trade unions' right of access
- ▶ New rights and protections for trade union representatives
- ▶ Extension of employment tribunal time limits from three months to six months
- ▶ Extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action

2027...

1st January – reduction of unfair dismissal qualifying service from two years to six months.

Other measures coming in include:

- ▶ Rights for pregnant workers
- ▶ Introducing a power to enable regulations to specify steps that are to be regarded as “reasonable”, to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment
- ▶ Collective redundancy — collective consultation threshold
- ▶ Requiring employers to explain why it was reasonable to refuse a flexible working request
- ▶ Bereavement leave and extending parental bereavement leave to miscarriages occurring before the 24th week of pregnancy
- ▶ Ending the exploitative use of zero-hours contracts and applying measures to agency workers
- ▶ Gender pay gap and menopause action plans (introduced on a voluntary basis in April 2026) 250+ employees

Probationary period best practice

- ▶ 4+2 or 3+3
- ▶ Please make a decision well within the first 6 months
- ▶ Set clear objectives
- ▶ Put meetings in at 2 months, 4 months and a final meeting
- ▶ Make notes of the meetings – get them signed
- ▶ Give clear feedback
- ▶ Don't be afraid to dismiss people who aren't right
- ▶ The first 6 months is your opportunity
- ▶ Much harder after this.....

Employee relations



What does this cover?



Why is it important to have an awareness of this area?



What are some of the key skills managers need to be able to draw upon to manage this area well?

Consistency and fairness

Why is consistency and fairness good management practice?

How can you be a consistent and fair manager?

Employee handbook, HR policies & procedures

What is the difference between a policy and a procedure?

Why are HR policies and procedures important?

What is an employee handbook used for?

What are the risks of not following the policies and procedures in the employee handbook?

Claims & Compensation

Type of claim	Compensation	Example	Length of service
Unfair dismissal	Max. £86,444 or 1 yrs salary if lower	Not following disciplinary procedures	2 years/6months
Constructive dismissal	Max. £86,444 or 1 yrs salary if lower	Forced to work nights	2 years
Discrimination	Unlimited	Treated differently due to race	None
Breach of contract	£25,000	Not given notice	None

Family Friendly Rights

- ▶ Maternity leave and pay
- ▶ Paternity leave and pay
- ▶ Adoption leave and pay
- ▶ Shared parental leave
- ▶ Right to request flexible working
- ▶ Parental leave
- ▶ Right to time off for those with dependants
- ▶ Parental bereavement leave

Equality

- ▶ Age discrimination
- ▶ Disability discrimination
- ▶ Gender reassignment discrimination
- ▶ Marriage and civil partnership discrimination
- ▶ Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
- ▶ Race discrimination
- ▶ Religion and belief discrimination
- ▶ Sex discrimination
- ▶ Sexual orientation discrimination
- ▶ Equal pay
- ▶ Harassment and bullying
- ▶ Gender pay gap reporting
- ▶ Ethnicity pay gap reporting

Termination

Employee Led

Dismissal
Conduct

Dismissal
Performance

Redundancy

Resignation

Illegality or
breach of a
statutory
restriction

SOSR



Retirement

Fair reasons for dismissal

Dismissal
Conduct

Dismissal
Performance

Redundancy

Illegality or
breach of a
statutory
restriction

SOSR

Unfair dismissal

To avoid a claim for unfair dismissal an employer must have:

- ▶ A potentially fair reason to dismiss
- ▶ Acted **reasonably** in treating this reason as sufficient to justify dismissal
- ▶ Followed a fair procedure (e.g. disciplinary procedure)

Automatically unfair reasons for dismissal

- ▶ Taking action on health and safety grounds
- ▶ Asserting statutory rights
- ▶ Reasons related to pregnancy or maternity leave
- ▶ Refusal to work over 48 hours a week (Working Time Regulations)
- ▶ Making a protected disclosure (blowing the whistle)
- ▶ Making a request for flexible working arrangements

Acas

- ▶ Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
- ▶ They work with millions of employers and employees every year to improve workplace relationships
- ▶ They're an independent public body that receives funding from the government
- ▶ Acas gives advice for every worker and employer across England, Scotland and Wales
- ▶ They advise on employment law and good practice

Acas

Advice topics

Pay and hours

How to agree pay and working arrangements. Flexible working. Wages and deductions.

Holiday and leave

How workers can take time off. Managing absence. Annual leave and sick leave.

Equality and wellbeing

How to make work more inclusive. Health and wellbeing. Handling discrimination and bullying.

Starting and ending employment

What should be in a contract. Applying and hiring. Resignation, retirement and dismissals.

Consultation and change

When and why employers should consult. Changes to contracts. TUPE transfers.

Conflict and resolution

How to solve problems. Informal steps. Discipline and grievance. Employment tribunals.

Acas

Templates and Codes

Templates

What to put in letters, forms and policies. Free templates for workers and employers.

Acas Codes of Practice

What the minimum standards of fairness are that employers should follow. Used by employment tribunals.