

Employment Legislation Timetable

April 2012

Plans to simplify personal taxation

HM Treasury has announced plans to reform income tax and national insurance contributions by aligning the two more closely. *A detailed consultation is due to be launched and it is currently envisaged that the reforms will take place around 2017.*

June 2012

Tribunals to be given power to order pay audits

The Government has proposed giving employment tribunals power to order pay audits where an employer is found guilty of gender discrimination in pay matters. *A second consultation is likely to take place before the proposals are implemented.*

June 2012

Equal treatment for self-employed workers

This has introduced a new entitlement for self-employed women and female spouses and life partners of self-employed workers, to maternity benefits, including at least 14 weeks' maternity allowance.

10 September 2012

Reforms to Criminal Records Bureau checks

Provisions of The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 came into force which made changes to the vetting and barring scheme and to the system of provision of CRB checks. It is intended that CRB checks will be instantly accessible online and will be portable.

19 September 2012

Closure of BIS collective redundancy consultation

The consultation proposed that the 90-day minimum consultation period be reduced to either 30 days for all collective redundancies or 45 days for planned redundancies of 100 or more employees. A new non-statutory code of practice would be introduced.

30 September 2012

Closure of Bill of Rights consultation

This consultation sought further views on whether a UK Bill of Rights is needed and if so what form it should take.

October 2012

EU proposals and BIS inquiry into workplace gender equality

The Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee has announced a new inquiry into women in the workplace, to consider topics such as pay and job segregation inequalities. Submissions are requested by 5 October 2012.

The EU Justice Commissioner will propose legislative action on gender quotas for corporate boards. Large companies will be required to report annually on the gender composition of their boards, and fines will be payable by any not meeting the mandatory quota of 40% women.

1 October 2012

Auto-enrolment under Pensions Act 2008

The Pensions Act provides that from 1 October 2012 all eligible workers, who are not already in a workplace pension scheme, must be automatically enrolled into either their employers' pension scheme or a new savings vehicle, known as a personal account scheme. Employees can choose to "opt-out" of the scheme. To encourage participation, employees' pension contributions will be supplemented by contributions from employers and tax relief. Small employers will not be subject to auto-enrolment until at least June 2015.

1 October 2012

Amendments to UK Corporate Governance Code

For financial years beginning on or after 1 October 2012, the amendments to the UK Corporate Governance Code will come into force. There will be two amendments that are aimed at strengthening the principle of boardroom diversity; listed companies will be required to report annually on their boardroom diversity policy and will be required to consider gender diversity when evaluating board effectiveness.

1 October 2012

Ban on age discrimination in goods and services

The ban on age discrimination in the provision of goods, services and facilities, introduced by the Equality Act 2010 has come into force, to bring age into line with other discrimination strands. Certain exceptions to the ban will also come into force, including a broad exception to permit financial services providers to continue to use age as a factor in the products and prices they offer.

1 October 2012

National Minimum Wage increases

The standard adult rate (workers 21 and over) has risen from £6.08 to £6.19 per hour. The rate for apprentices has risen to £2.65 per hour. The accommodation offset has risen to £4.82 per day. The development rate and the young workers rate remains unchanged at £4.98 and £3.68 respectively.

16 October 2012

Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill 2012

Report stage to commence. Proposed amendments include: introduction of a mandatory pre-claim Acas conciliation procedure; a power for the government to vary the maximum unfair dismissal compensatory award; compromise agreements to be renamed "settlement agreements"; enhanced shareholder voting rights on executive remuneration; reform of the EHRC; financial penalties for employers and legal officers; EAT judges to sit alone; qualifying whistleblowing disclosures must be made in the public interest.

9 October 2012

Committee stage of Crime and Courts Bill 2012-2013

The Bill proposes to merge all 170 county courts in England and Wales into a single body. There are also provisions to reform judicial appointments to encourage greater diversity, and to allow the recording of court proceedings.

Late 2012

Pilot scheme for regional mediation networks

BIS will fund mediation training for employees from a group of 24 SMEs in pilot areas. The pilot will run for 12 months and general implementation will be considered if successful.

2013	<p>School leaving age is raised to 18</p> <p>The Education and Skills Act 2008 changes the statutory framework to put a duty on all young people in England to participate in education or training until the age of 18. It also amends legislation about the provision of adult education and training, and support for young people.</p>
March 2013	<p>Revised Parental Leave Directive comes into force</p> <p>This will implement the revised Framework Directive on Parental Leave and repeal Directive 96/34/EC. Parental leave will increase from 3 to 4 months.</p>
April 2013	<p>Reforms to legal aid, litigation funding and costs</p> <p>Part 2 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill 2010-12 Conditional fee agreements is expected to come into force. This will reform the legal aid system and make various changes to how litigation fees and costs are recovered.</p>
Summer 2013	<p>Two-stage fee charging structure in the employment tribunal</p> <p>A new charging structure is expected to come into force. Claimants will need to pay an “issue fee” when they submit their claim or appeal, followed by a “hearing fee” prior to a hearing. The amount of each fee will depend on the type of claim, with remissions available for claimants who cannot afford the fees.</p>
2013/2014 tax year	<p>Further decrease in corporation tax, decrease in top rate of tax on earnings and rise in personal allowance</p> <p>The corporation tax rate is to be reduced to 23%. The top rate of tax on earnings over £150,000 will be reduced from 50% to 45%. The personal allowance will be raised by a further £1,100 to £9,205.</p>
2014	<p>Steps to reform health and safety regulations</p> <p>The Government intends to implement the key recommendations from Professor Lofstedt’s review of health and safety legislation by the end of 2014. These will include a consolidation of existing health and safety regulations and the deregulation of most self-employed people.</p> <p><i>A consultation on exempting self-employed workers from health and safety legislation is ongoing, with responses to be received by the end of October 2012.</i></p>
1 August 2014	<p>Abolition of minimum salary for trainee solicitors</p> <p>The current minimum salary levels of £18,590 in Central London and £16,650 elsewhere will cease to apply, but trainees will still be protected by the National Minimum Wage Act 1998.</p>
2014/2015 tax year	<p>Reduction in corporation tax</p> <p>The corporation tax rate is to be reduced to 22%.</p>

2015

“Flexible” maternity and paternity leave is expected to be introduced

Changes will be made to maternity and paternity leave to give parents more flexibility as to when they take time off. It is expected that the changes will allow both parents to take leave at the same time, instead of the mother having to have returned to work before the father can take additional paternity leave, and allow parents to take time off in blocks, rather than all in one go.

2016

Minimum pay threshold for migrants wanting to settle in the UK

The Government plans to introduce a minimum pay threshold of £35,000 a year for skilled workers under the Tier 2 (general) and Tier 2 (sportsperson) immigration routes who want to settle in the UK.

April 2016

Equalisation of state pension age for women

The state pension age for women is equalised with the state pension age for men by November 2018, with an expedited increase from April 2016.

December 2018

State pension age rises to 66 years

The Pensions Act 2007 raises the state pension age from 65 to 66 years to reflect the ageing nature of the population. The rise in the state pension age to 66 for men and women begins gradually from December 2018 until April 2020.

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