

Latest developments in employment law for strategic HR leads

Date: Thursday 23 April 2026 | **Format:** online event via Microsoft Team

Led by **Matt Kelly**, Partner and **David O'Hara**, Principal Associate at **Eversheds Sutherland**

09:30 Welcome and introductions

09.35 Session 1

Employment Rights Act

The Employment Rights Act received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025 and introduces a number of important changes on a staggered basis during 2026 and 2027. In this session we will look at what is in the Act and what is subject to the outcome of further consultations. We will look at what will come into force on which date and practical tips on preparing for the new legislation including:

- the reduction of the qualifying period to claim unfair dismissal to 6 months, the removal of the cap on compensation for unfair dismissal and the extension of the period for bringing tribunal claims
- changes to the law in relation to trade unions and industrial action – with some key changes taking effect from 18 February 2026 and others following in April and October 2026
- the impact of changes to collective consultation and fire and rehire on restructuring and changing terms and conditions
- the new provisions on zero and low hours workers and the areas still to be clarified
- pregnancy, maternity, family leave and bereavement
- equality action plans
- statutory sick pay
- the Fair Work Agency
- flexible working

Questions

10:30 Break

10.45 Session 2

Employment Rights Act continued (*if needed*)

Protection from harassment – this session will look at the provisions in the Employment Rights Act on the extension of the proactive duty on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, the reintroduction of third-party harassment (all protected characteristics) and on non-disclosure agreements. We will discuss what institutions can do to comply with these obligations and highlight any other recent developments.

Questions

Freedom of Speech – After much delay, 1 August 2025 finally saw the coming into force of a number of the provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. We will look at what has come into force, what had been dropped and what else will come into force in amended form at a later date. We will also consider the OfS guidance which applies in England, the position in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and any recent developments.

Questions

11:45 Break

12:00 Session 3

Other key employment law issues

- the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, consultation on mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting and the equality law call for evidence
- access to toilets and changing facilities – a look at the recent case law, EHRC guidance and what it all means for institutions
- AI
- update on other recent developments including Medr consultation conditions of registration and funding and Scotland Fair Work First

Questions

12.45 Q&A Surgery on recent employment law issues

1.00 Close