

David Allen – CECA Southern Executive Director





CECA Regions

- SCOTLAND
- NORTH EAST
- NORTH WEST
- YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE
- WALES
- MIDLANDS
- SOUTH WEST
- SOUTHERN



David Allen – CECA Southern Executive Director

HR Rely Employment Law Update

Ingrid McGhee and Seema Champaneri

Scope of Presentation

- HR Rely
- Employment Rights Bill - What do we currently know?
- Roadmap



HR Rely

Fixed Fee Employment Law and HR Support

21 October 2025

Seema Champaneri
Commercial HR Rely Lead

Why Weightmans

We are a National Firm with more than 1653 people working from ten offices nationwide. Our focus is on creating an outstanding law firm for the future, achieving results for our clients and success for our people. We are very proud of the work we do with all our clients.

Awards and Accreditations

146 specialism rankings and 453 individual rankings in Chambers & Partners and Legal 500

Top Employers Institute 2025 (18th year running)

Ranked in the Times Best Law Firms 2024 (6th year running)

Ranked Diversity Pioneers in The Lawyer UK 200 Diversity Awards — ranked 3rd most diverse law firm

'Advice is provided quickly, which is important in helping me deal with dynamic employment issues.'

Legal 500 2026



We received a platinum rating (Top 1%)

9.2 Overall customer satisfaction against legal industry average of 8.3




140 specialism rankings and 563 individual rankings in Chambers and Legal 500

ESG collaboration




Living Wage Employer



We have scooped numerous accreditations, including **top employer** for the **eighteenth year** running, as well as entering the **top ten** again for 2025



Innovation / Tech

Innovation at Weightmans isn't a service or a side hustle. It's a problem-solving mindset that runs through our organisation, bringing our expertise together with emerging technology to yield greater, even unexpected results



1/4 Act for 1/4 of FTSE 100 companies

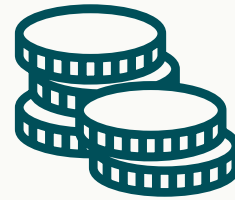
Award winning 23 awards won since 2024




CECA Partnership



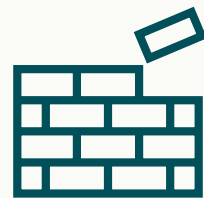
Monthly Employment
Newsletter



Exclusive Discounted Package
for
CECA Members



Member Events



Built Environment
Expertise



Full-Service
Offering

We are a 'one stop shop' for all HR and legal services

Cost Certainty: HR Rely offers fees which provide clients with cost certainty at an accessible level.

Sector Expertise: Clients benefit from access to a team of professionals with extensive sector specific expertise and knowledge.

Flexible Support Structures: We accommodate various client needs, whether acting as HR, providing practical support, offering advice only, or a hybrid package including litigation support.

Qualified Legal Support: Advice and support is provided by qualified lawyers within a regulated environment. We ensure that you only work with lawyers.

Employment Tribunal Advocacy: Our qualified team handles its own advocacy, so you'll be represented by named individuals you know, throughout the process, ensuring consistency and peace of mind

Comprehensive Service: HR Rely serves as a one-stop-shop with national scope, addressing a wide range of needs to support HR professionals

We help with:

- Effective recruitment
- Handling discipline and grievances
- Handling bullying and harassment and employee conflict
- Equality and Diversity and avoiding discrimination claims
- Managing sickness absence and disability
- Managing employee performance issues
- Making redundancies and restructuring your business
- Managing employee data: GDPR, Data protection and subject access requests
- Terminating employment and dismissing an employee fairly
- Plus, other employment related matters



What is included?

- A dedicated team of advisors to provide support to your business
- Unlimited access to the HR Rely online members' library
- Regular updates and invites to HR Rely member events
- Review meeting with dedicated client relationship manager
- Option to purchase discounted tribunal support
- Unlimited access to HR Rely Advice
- Health check of a standard contract and core HR policies
- ACAS early conciliation support

Gold

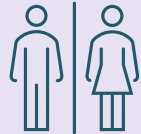
Platinum



Weightmans are your Comprehensive Legal Partner

Weightmans is a full-service law firm that provides clients with a convenient “one-stop-shop” for all their legal requirements at competitive rates. Regardless of your legal needs—ranging from Investigations to ESG—Weightmans is here to assist you.

Please see some of our most popular bolt-on’s below:



Mediation

We have an in-house Mediation unit of accredited mediators who can help with any difficult to unpick workplace disputes, which can cause significant disruption and take up administrative time and effort to resolve.



Training

Getting new starters up to speed on the legal basics, to detailed technical briefings for managers and/or HR professionals. Our team of experienced presenters can train your people on any aspect of employment law or HR practice.



Pensions

Our expert team excels in navigating the complexities of pension law, ensuring your organisation stays compliant while optimising employee benefits. We offer tailored solutions that align with your business objectives, providing clarity and peace of mind.



ESG

Our team guides you through ESG regulations, ensuring compliance and sustainable growth. We offer strategic advice on integrating ESG principles, helping build a resilient business model. Whether you need help with ESG policy development, risk management, or reporting frameworks, our experts support you.



Investigations

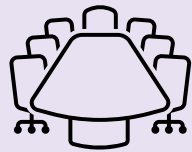
Our Investigations team addresses disciplinary issues, grievances, and bullying/harassment complaints with sensitivity and professionalism. We prioritise prompt resolution to maintain a harmonious work environment, ensuring a thorough and impartial approach.

<p>Up to 25 Employees</p> <p>Recommended Minimum Hours: 5 Hours</p>	<p>26-50 Employees</p> <p>Recommended Minimum Hours: 10 Hours</p>	<p>51-100 Employees</p> <p>Recommended Minimum Hours: 15 Hours</p>	<p>100+ Employees</p> <p>Recommended Minimum Hours: HR Rely Platinum</p>
<p>£1,045 + VAT</p>	<p>£2,090 + VAT</p>	<p>£3,135 + VAT</p>	<p>Contact Us for a Bespoke Price</p>

Employment Rights Bill What do we currently know?

Ingrid McGhee, Partner

Employment Rights Bill - Proposals



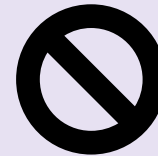
Unfair Dismissal

The Government intends to remove the two-year qualifying period entirely and implement a modified dismissal process that should apply during a statutory probationary period. Consultation on these proposals is scheduled to take place during Autumn 2025 with the provisions coming into force in 2027.



Flexible Working

The Government intends to greatly restrict the ability of employers to dismiss and re-engage employees as a way of forcing through changes to employees' terms and conditions of employment.



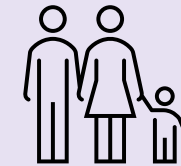
Zero Hours

The ERB provisions relating to zero hours, low hours and agency workers do not explicitly ban exploitative zero hours contracts, but they may in practice result in reducing the number of zero hours contracts in use.



Fire and Rehire

The Government intends to greatly restrict the ability of employers to dismiss and re-engage employees as a way of forcing through changes to employees' terms and conditions of employment.

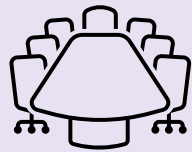


Family Leave

ERB will amend the relevant provisions of the ERA 1996 in respect of each of the following types of statutory family leave to permit regulations to be made about dismissal after a period of such leave (rather than just during the leave period, as is currently the case).



Employment Rights Bill - Proposals



Collective Redundancies

The Government intends to strengthen the collective redundancy framework. They intend to consult on doubling the minimum time limit for starting collective consultation before the first dismissal takes effect when an employer is proposing to dismiss 100 or more employees from 45 to 90 days. It's understood that these proposals are not due to be implemented in the ERB.



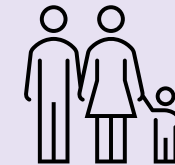
Statutory Sick Pay

ERB will amend the current rules such that SSP will be payable from the first sick day rather than from the fourth day.



Fair Work Agency

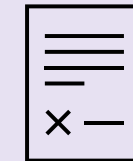
ERB sets out provisions for the enforcement of labour market legislation. The Secretary of State will be responsible for the enforcement of certain labour market legislation (listed in Part 1 of Schedule 7) and will have the power to delegate labour market enforcement functions to a public authority and to appoint enforcement officers



Family Friendly Rights

ERB purports to make changes to the following:

- Introduction of Neonatal leave and pay.
- Extending redundancy protection for women and new parents
- Paternity leave reform
- Bereaved partners paternity leave
- Bereavement leave
- Carer's leave



NDAs

ERB will make any provision in an agreement between an employer and a worker void in so far as it purports to preclude the worker from making an allegation of, or disclosure of information relating to relevant harassment or discrimination.



Unfair Dismissal

- Repeal of qualifying period – day 1 right.
- However:
 - Initial Period of Employment / a statutory probation period?
 - Lighter touch process/reasonableness test
 - Less compensation
- Subject to consultation
 - Scheduled to take place in Autumn 2025 with provisions coming into force in 2027
- Internal processes will be important
- Limited ability to terminate early on in employment as compared to current position



Flexible Working

- Flexible working the default option from day one except where “not reasonably feasible”
- Refusal remains available, however:
 - Refusal must be reasonable, not just the process
 - Reasons must be in writing
- Employer may only refuse an application for flexible working :
 - The employer considers that the application should be refused on one or more of the existing statutory grounds
 - It is reasonable for the employer to refuse the application on that ground or those grounds.
- Justification for refusals should be properly considered / trial periods more common?



Zero Hours/Low Hours

- Right to guaranteed hours
 - Regularly worked
 - Reference period
 - This now includes agency workers
- Reasonable notice of shift change
 - Compensation
- All requires clarification
 - Likely 12 weeks
 - Not more than they would have earned
- Potentially to be more prevalent in the future due to seeking to offer more flexibility / thinking differently about attracting employees?
- Government anticipates consulting on implementation of statutory scheme in Autumn 2025 with legislation coming into force in 2027



Fire and Rehire

- Original 'fire and rehire' proposal would have effectively prevented employers from implementing any contractual changes
- Amendments in July's ERB update – dismissal will only be automatically unfair if a 'restricted variation' of contract has taken place
- Failure to comply with collective consultation Protective Award Cap increased 90 to 180 days
- Potentially very expensive when getting collective consultation wrong
- Further consultation to take place in Autumn 2025 with the provisions due for implementation in October 2026
- Government has decided not to introduce new rights to interim relief in fire and rehire or collective redundancy situations as it does not currently believe that interim relief would be an effective remedy



Collective Redundancies

- Removal of "establishment" principle, which refers to employees employed at a particular site – Woolworths Case
- Establishment likely to be widened to number of people affected across an organisation as a whole rather than in one establishment
- No longer able to consider numbers limited to each site
- Likely to need wider awareness of what is going on elsewhere in the business
- Government anticipates consulting on its proposals for redundancy consultation in the winter of 2025 or early 2026 - legislation coming into force in 2027



Statutory Sick Pay

- No 3 day wait
- Lower Earnings Limit – removed
- Increasing to £118.75 per week
- Increased £ burden



Fair Work Agency

- For enforcement of statutory employment rights including:
 - National Minimum Wage
 - SSP
 - Holiday Pay
 - Amongst others
- Stated aims to be to support workers and good employers and punish bad ones. How they plan on doing that is unclear.
- Real impact remains unclear, but likely to be more rules to follow, more cost and therefore risk
- It is anticipated that FWA will be established in April 2026. However, no indication about when its enforcement powers will be brought into force



Family Friendly Rights

- Additional protection against dismissal for returners from maternity leave
- Maternity Pay - day 1 right
- Paternity leave – day 1 right
- Unpaid Parental leave - day 1 right
- Bereavement leave to be extended to all workers
- Miscarriage leave
- Greater need to understand leave obligations at line manager level, increased need to cover work etc



Non-disclosure agreements

- Employers are already prohibited from using an NDA to prevent an employee from making a 'protected disclosure' under WB legislation
- Sexual harassment should be deemed a 'protected disclosure'
- Amendments will render void any clause in an agreement which precludes the worker from making any allegation of, or disclosure of information relating to, any 'relevant' harassment or discrimination
- Will not apply to 'excepted agreements'

ERB: What's next?

- House of Lords consideration of Commons reasons and amendments scheduled on 28 October 2025
- Royal Assent is expected at some point in Autumn 2025
- Consultations expected on trade union measures, dismissal and re-engagement (fire and re-hire), regulation of umbrella companies, bereavement leave, increased rights for pregnant workers and ending exploitative use of zero hours contracts in Autumn 2025
- Consultations expected on further trade union measures, tightening tipping laws, collective redundancies and flexible working expected in Winter 2025 to early 2026
- Consultation on what will amount to reasonable steps to prevent workplace sexual harassment expected in 2026 or 2027

Q&A



Contact Details:

Ingrid McGhee

Partner – EPI HR Rely

Email: ingrid.mcghee@weightmans.com

Website: <https://www.weightmans.com>

DDI: 0141 404 9300

Contact Details:

Seema Champaneri

Commercial HR Rely Lead

Email: seema.champaneri@weightmans.com

Website: <https://www.weightmans.com>

Mob:07977698162