October 2026 employment law changes

What's changed, what it means and how Breathe helps

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What's changed	What it means	What's the risk	How Breathe helps
Longer tribunal time limits 1 OCTOBER	The time limit for bringing most tribunal claims has **doubled from three months to six**.	A dispute may surface much later than the original incident. If meeting notes, policy versions, training records and decision-making evidence are scattered or missing, it becomes harder to understand what happened and defend your process.	Breathe gives you a central place for policies, training records, employee information and acknowledgements, helping you build a clearer evidence trail.
Duty to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent harassment 30 OCTOBER	The prevention duty has risen from taking reasonable steps to **all reasonable steps** to prevent sexual harassment of workers.	A policy that sits in a folder is unlikely to be enough on its own. If you cannot show that you identified risks, trained people, provided reporting routes and acted on concerns, you may be exposed to claims and enforcement action.	Document management lets you create and share harassment and bullying policies, with an audit trail of who has read and acknowledged them. Breathe Learn supports prevention training, while Health & Safety lets you build and track harassment risk assessments.
Third-party harassment liability 30 OCTOBER	Employers are **liable for harassment by third parties** – customers, clients, suppliers or the public – covering all types of harassment.	Customer-facing roles, work-related events, travel and off-site meetings can all create exposure. Without clear reporting routes and evidence of preventative action, it may be difficult to show how risks were managed.	Health & Safety lets you create third-party harassment risks and actions. Document management keeps reporting policies and guidance accessible, and Breathe Learn supports consistent, tracked training for employees and managers.
Union rights of access 30 OCTOBER	Unions can request physical and digital access to workers at any business with **more than 20 employees**. You have **15 days** to respond.	Without a clear owner and process, you may respond inconsistently, miss a statutory timescale or leave managers unsure how to handle an access request. Breaches can attract fines of up to £500,000.	Document management keeps access processes, manager guidance and relevant policies together. An audit trail of acknowledgements provides a record that updates have been shared, while training records help show that managers have been briefed.

Make staying compliant simpler

See how Breathe helps you stay compliant with a full audit trail, secure policy storage, team training and risk assessment creation.

Explore Breathe

Free Employment Law Hub

Guides, checklists, templates and webinars covering every 2026–2027 change.

Visit the hub