

HR UPDATE

In this issue:

- 6 WAYS THAT PREVENTATIVE HR CAN SAVE YOU TIME, MONEY AND HASSLE
- SUMMER HOLIDAYS: BALANCING FLEXIBILITY AND BUSINESS
- IT'S PRIDE MONTH! MAKE INCLUSION MORE THAN A MOMENT
- ARE YOUR PAY SCALES GETTING SQUEEZED BY MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES?
- HOT WEATHER ISN'T ALWAYS HOT FOR WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY.
- AI IN HIRING: HELPFUL OR HARMFUL?
- DAY-ONE UNFAIR DISMISSAL RIGHTS TO BE INTRODUCED IN 2026
- WATCH OUT- CRACKDOWN ON RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS

6 WAYS THAT 'PREVENTATIVE HR' CAN SAVE YOU TIME, MONEY AND HASSLE

There are many business owners who do not necessarily prioritise 'preventative HR' and end up fire-fighting.

This tends to be short-sighted and can cause additional time and costs involved, as well as more hassle. That's why we encourage you to take a long-term, preventative approach to your HR.



Here are 6 ways that preventative HR can save you time, money and hassle:

1. Staying legally compliant

When businesses take a reactive approach to compliance, it's very likely that you'll end up at an employment tribunal paying thousands in legal fees.

2. Train your managers to lead effectively

"People don't leave jobs, they leave people". Great managers will help your business thrive. Bad managers will put your business into survival mode. That's why training your managers to be great leaders is essential.

3. Prioritise employee wellbeing

Supporting your employees' wellbeing isn't just good for them- it's good for your business. A healthy, happy workforce is more productive and less likely to leave

4. Develop and enforce clear policies

Clear policies help you to set expectations and handle issues consistently. They also protect your business by ensuring everyone understands the rules.

5. Manage performance

Addressing performance issues early prevents them from escalating and impacting your business. Proactive performance management ensures that your team are productive and aligned with your goals.

6. Encourage open communication

Encouraging open communication helps you to address concerns before they become bigger issues. It also builds trust and boosts employee morale. Preventative HR is about staying ahead.

By implementing these measures, you'll create a more efficient, compliant and engaged workplace.



SUMMER HOLIDAYS: BALANCING FLEXIBILITY AND BUSINESS

With summer approaching, managing annual leave can quickly become a logistical puzzle. From overlapping holidays to school closures and childcare gaps, many teams will be stretched thin in the coming months. For managers and business owners, balancing flexibility with business continuity is key.

Planning ahead is essential. Clear leave booking systems, early deadlines, and open conversations can help avoid bottlenecks. Encourage staff to stagger time off where possible, and ensure line managers have visibility of team availability before approving holidays. For parents, flexible hours or remote working during school breaks may ease the pressure.

Let's not forget about burnout - encouraging staff to fully switch off is essential for wellbeing. But for those left behind, workload shouldn't double. Consider short-term support or temporary cover for business-critical roles.



ARE YOUR PAY SCALES GETTING SQUEEZED BY MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES?

Here's an interesting trend we're seeing. With the recent Living Wage jump, many businesses now have experienced staff earning only marginally more than new starters. Now's a good time to review your entire reward structure, not just for compliance, but to make sure you're still recognising the value your experience team members bring.

Let us know if you'd like a fresh pair of eyes on your approach



HAPPY
PRIDE
MONTH

IT'S PRIDE MONTH! MAKE INCLUSION MORE THAN A MOMENT

June marks Pride Month - a time to recognise and celebrate LGBTQ+ communities. For employers, it's also a timely opportunity to reflect on inclusivity in the workplace.

True inclusivity goes beyond rainbow logos. It's about creating an environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and able to be themselves at work. That means policies that explicitly protect LGBTQ+ staff, supportive language in your communications, and educating your whole team on inclusion. It might also mean rethinking facilities, dress codes, or benefits that unintentionally exclude.

Employee resource groups and inclusive hiring practices all play a part. Pride Month is a great moment to shine a light on these efforts - but inclusivity needs to be embedded all year round, not just celebrated for one month.





HOT WEATHER ISN'T ALWAYS HOT FOR WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY

The warmer months can bring a noticeable dip in productivity. Between heatwaves, school holidays, and that summer holiday mindset, motivation and output often take a hit. In fact, research by the Global Payroll Association [GPA] found that 31% of UK workers finish work early during a heatwave, and 34% take longer lunches to enjoy the sunshine.

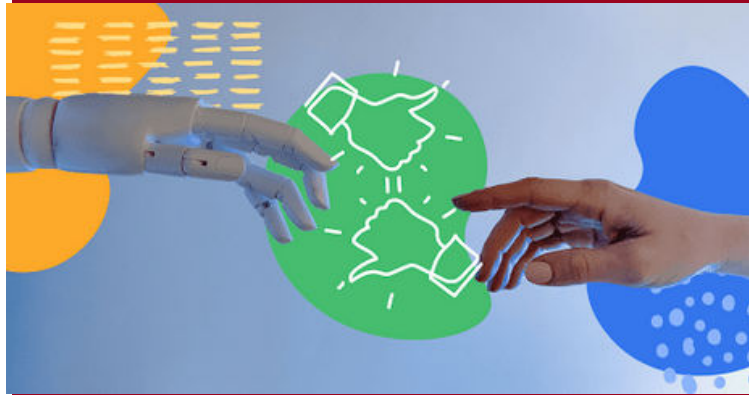
And while that may sound like bad news, it's actually a great opportunity to build trust and flexibility. Supporting staff through warmer weather can improve morale and boost engagement long-term.



Here are some quickfire tips to consider:

- Flexible hours - Start earlier, finish earlier, and beat the heat.
- Walking meetings - If possible, take meetings outside to enjoy the sun.
- Hybrid options - Let staff work from home during hot spells (where appropriate), especially if commuting is uncomfortable.
- Keep it cool - Provide cold drinks, relaxed dress codes, and encourage breaks.
- Listen to your team - Create space for staff to share feedback and ideas for staying comfortable.

AI in Hiring: Helpful or Harmful?



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more common in hiring - from CV screening and interview scheduling to candidate scoring and even video assessments. For HR teams, it promises speed, efficiency, and objectivity. But it's not without risk.

Used well, AI can reduce time spent on administrative tasks and help identify great candidates. But algorithms aren't free from bias. Without careful oversight, AI tools can reinforce discrimination, reject strong applicants, or fall short when it comes to data protection laws.

The UK's Equality Act still applies to AI. If your tools unfairly disadvantage certain groups, your business could be liable. And with new EU AI regulations already making waves, more scrutiny in the UK may not be far off.

AI should support - but not replace - human judgment. That means regular audits, diverse training data, and transparency with candidates about how decisions are made.

However you run your hiring process, choose an approach that's fair, legal, and effective.

Contact us if you need support with developing an AI Policy



DAY-ONE UNFAIR DISMISSAL RIGHTS TO BE INTRODUCED IN 2026

The UK government is planning a major reform to employment law, scrapping the current two-year qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims. From October 2026, employees will be protected from unfair dismissal from their first day on the job.

A new "initial period of employment," likely set at nine months, will still allow for dismissal under a simplified process during probation. Employers will need to follow a fair, lighter-touch procedure - likely involving at least one meeting and documented concerns.

The reform also removes the two-year requirement for requesting written reasons for dismissal. Employees will be entitled to this after the initial employment period, prompting employers to prepare to justify dismissals much earlier.

While the move increases employee rights, it also encourages employers to manage performance proactively from day one. Businesses are urged to review probation policies, train managers, and update documentation ahead of the changes.

A special compensation cap for unfair dismissals during the initial period is expected, though details are pending. Employers can still dismiss during probation - but arbitrary or undocumented firings will no longer be risk-free.



WATCH OUT - CRACKDOWN ON RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS

The government recently revealed that enforcement teams raided 828 premises in January 2025, targeting nail bars, car washes and restaurants, these raids resulted in 609 arrests, which is a 73% increase compared to last January.

Make sure you're protected!

<https://hrzone.com/government-crackdown-on-illegal-workers-right-to-work-checks/>



NEED A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT?

If you have a problem brewing in your business, you're worried about something or you simply need some expert HR support, then please get in touch for a confidential chat.

A quick conversation could save you from a very costly mistake and we could give you the clarity you need to decide your next steps with confidence.

[Book a meeting here](#)





QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Following the government's planned changes to unfair dismissal rights from October 2026, we've had a lot of questions from employers wanting to understand what this really means in practice. This edition's Q&A is dedicated to unpacking the changes, including explaining what you can still do under the new rules:

Does this mean we can't dismiss anyone within their first year anymore?

No, you still can - if there's a valid reason and you follow the proper process. The new law is designed to stop arbitrary firings, not legitimate ones. If a new hire is underperforming or demonstrating poor behaviour, you'll still be able to let them go, provided you've documented the issues and had at least one meeting to raise concerns and hear their response.

Will this lead to more tribunal claims from new employees?

Likely yes, especially from those with under two years' service. But tribunals will assess whether you followed the lighter, probation-period process. If the dismissal felt fair and was properly documented, many employees may not bother claiming - especially if compensation is capped.

Won't giving a reason for dismissal earlier make it easier for employees to challenge us?

It could invite more scrutiny, but transparency is key. If your reason is clear, fact-based, and backed by evidence (like performance reviews or attendance records), it acts as protection - not a risk. Vague or evasive reasons are more likely to cause problems.

Can we still say someone is 'not the right fit'?

Possibly, but you'll need to back it up. "Not the right fit" is too vague on its own. Be prepared to explain what that means - was it poor teamwork, communication issues? Raise those concerns with the employee and give them a chance to improve. Gut feelings won't be enough.

Are we required to keep all employees for at least nine months?

No. The nine-month period isn't a minimum threshold - it's just when the full unfair dismissal protections kick in. You can still end employment earlier, as long as you follow the expected simplified process and treat the employee fairly.

Should we extend probation if we're unsure about someone close to nine months?

You can, but only if it's purposeful. Use the extension to outline what needs improvement, set clear expectations, and explain the risks if progress isn't made. Avoid casual extensions, which can delay necessary action and increase legal risk as full protections approach.

