

03 Statutory Sick Pay reform under the Employment Rights Act 2025

Due 6 April 2026 (government roadmap; commencement regulations to follow)

WHO IT AFFECTS	All employees, most of all part-time, low-paid and variable-hours staff who earned too little to qualify before.
THE NUMBER THAT MATTERS	SSP is paid from day one , not day four, and the Lower Earnings Limit test is removed. The rate is £123.25 a week or 80% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower (Employment Rights Act 2025 ss.10–11; DWP, Benefit and pension rates 2026 to 2027).
ACTION FOR HR	Update the absence policy and any contractual sick pay clause that mentions waiting days. Brief managers: short absences are paid and recorded from day one.
ACTION FOR FINANCE	Re-forecast sick pay on your own short-absence data: days one to three were unpaid. Check payroll applies the 80% rule below £154.06 average weekly earnings.

04 Day-one paternity leave and unpaid parental leave (GB)

From 6 April 2026 (SI 2026/3)

WHO IT AFFECTS	New starters and recent hires. Paternity leave needed 26 weeks' service; unpaid parental leave needed one year.
THE NUMBER THAT MATTERS	Both qualifying periods are removed (Employment Rights Act 2025 ss.15–16). Unpaid parental leave stays at 18 weeks per child up to age 18, with at most 4 weeks a year. Statutory Paternity Pay for 2026/27: £194.32 a week or 90% of average weekly earnings, if lower (DWP).
ACTION FOR HR	Update the family leave policy and starter pack. Leave is day one, but Statutory Paternity Pay still needs 26 weeks' service and earnings of at least the Lower Earnings Limit (£129 a week from 6 April 2026).
ACTION FOR FINANCE	Budget for cover, not the statutory rate. Plan cover for new hires in recruitment-heavy teams first.

RATES USED (ANNOUNCED 2026/27)

Class 3 voluntary NI	£18.40 a week
Class 2	£3.65 a week
NLW from 1 April 2026	£12.71 (was £12.21) · 18–20 £10.85 · under 18 and apprentice £8.00
SSP	£123.25 a week
SPP	£194.32 a week
Lower Earnings Limit	£129 a week
Employer Class 1 NI	15%

NEXT STEP

Explain changes like these
to employees

Book a walkthrough to see how Perky explains changes like these to employees.

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Also useful: model your 2026/27 employment costs with our Employer NI impact calculator at perkybenefits.co.uk/resources/employer-ni-impact-calculator.