The New *Starter Pack*

Take someone on properly, with the right paperwork from day one.

EDITION 2.2 · FOR 2026/27 AND THE 1 JANUARY 2027 RULES · UPDATED FOR BUDGET 2026 (28 OCTOBER 2026)



6 months	£12.71	Day 1
UNFAIR DISMISSAL, FROM 2027	NATIONAL LIVING WAGE, 21+	SSP FROM THE FIRST DAY OFF

START HERE

Read this first

You've worked out what a hire costs. This pack covers the part a calculator can't: doing the hire properly, and keeping room to change your mind.

For years an employee needed two years' service before they could claim ordinary unfair dismissal. From **1 January 2027** it's six months, and the cap on compensation goes on the same day. Anyone you take on now reaches six months after that date. Nothing here makes it hard to employ people; it moves the cost of sloppy paperwork forward. Every figure was **checked against official sources on 18 October 2026**.

Part one: what to do

What's changed, and what's coming	3
Six months, and no ceiling	4
Your six-month cut-off date	5
Notice, pay in lieu and your date	6
Day one: what they receive	7
Inside the written statement	8
The employee privacy notice	9
Before they start: the order	10
Right to work checks	11
The first six months	12
Probation that holds up	13
Conversations that create a record	14
Your 2026/27 numbers and cost	15
Sick pay, family pay, pensions, holiday	16
Common, costly mistakes	17
When to get help	18

Part two: the forms

How to use the forms	19
1. Key dates planner	20
2. New starter issue log	21
3. New starter details form	22
4. Right to work check record	23
5. Written statement of particulars	24–25
6. Employee privacy notice	26–27
7. Probation review record	28
8. Probation outcome letters	29
Sources	30

Budget 2026 update. Updated for the Budget on 28 October 2026: nothing in this pack changes for 2026/27. From 1 April 2027 the National Living Wage rises to £13.21 an hour (£11.27 for 18 to 20, £8.31 for 16 and 17 and apprentices; page 15). Employer NI and the Employment Allowance stay the same for 2027/28. The Employment Rights Act 2025 is coming in stages: the dates on page 3 were correct on 18 October 2026, so check gov.uk before relying on a date close to a commencement point.

Information, not legal advice. This is a template product prepared from published government guidance. It is not legal advice and no solicitor-client relationship is created by using it. It covers England, Wales and Scotland only. Employment law in Northern Ireland is separate: the 1 January 2027 unfair dismissal change does not apply there (the qualifying period stays at one year), and several other rules in this pack differ. Employers in Northern Ireland should use nidirect and the Labour Relations Agency. Where a situation is unusual, contested or high value, take advice from a qualified employment solicitor.

THE CALCULATION

Your six-month cut-off date

Not the six-month anniversary. Employment has to *end* before the employee completes six months, so notice has to be given earlier still.

What this date does, and doesn't do. Ending employment before this date means the employee can't bring an *ordinary* unfair dismissal claim. It doesn't make a dismissal safe. From their first day, an employee can still claim if the real reason is pregnancy, maternity or other family leave, whistleblowing, a health and safety concern, trade union membership or asserting a legal right, and anyone can bring a discrimination claim. None of these needs any qualifying service. Notice pay is still owed. If any of these could be in play, take advice before acting (page 18).

The rule, in three steps

1. **The qualifying day** is the day before the six-month anniversary of the start date. Start 22 July 2026: six months run from 22 July to 21 January, so an employee whose employment ends on or after **21 January 2027** qualifies.
2. **The last end date before the six-month right** is the day before that: 20 January 2027.
3. **The latest notice date** is that end date less your notice period. With one week's notice, notice must be given (and received) by 13 January 2027.

Worked dates, one week's statutory notice

START DATE	QUALIFIES IF EMPLOYMENT ENDS ON OR AFTER	LAST END DATE BEFORE SIX MONTHS	GIVE NOTICE BY	REVIEW BY
22 July 2026	21 January 2027	20 January 2027	**13 January 2027**	16 December 2026
1 September 2026	28 February 2027	27 February 2027	**20 February 2027**	23 January 2027
1 October 2026	31 March 2027	30 March 2027	**23 March 2027**	23 February 2027
2 November 2026	1 May 2027	30 April 2027	**23 April 2027**	26 March 2027
4 January 2027	3 July 2027	2 July 2027	**25 June 2027**	28 May 2027

"Review by" is four weeks before the notice date. For starts in early July 2026: any employment ending on or before 31 December 2026 is under the old two-year rule; from 1 January 2027 anyone who started on or before 2 July 2026 qualifies. If you end employment in late December 2026 without giving at least the statutory week's notice (for example by paying in lieu), that week can carry the date into January 2027 for this purpose. Treat that case as being under the new rule, and take advice.

Build in a margin. These are the last possible dates, not targets. Notice by letter or email generally takes effect when the employee receives and has a reasonable chance to read it, not when you send it (Supreme Court, *Haywood*, 2018). Aim to decide at least a week before the "give notice by" date, and hand notice over in person, confirmed in writing.

What to do with the date: work it out on day one with Form 1 and diary the review. At the review, confirm the hire in writing or start a documented process with time to finish it fairly. After the qualifying day, a dismissal needs a fair reason and a fair procedure.

FORM 1

Key dates planner

Complete on day one, not when a concern arises. Everything follows from the start date and the notice in the contract.

Employee name	
Job title	
(A) Start date	
(B) Notice you must give during probation (from the contract; at least one week once they've worked a month)	

Work these out now

ITEM	HOW	YOUR DATE
(C) Six-month anniversary	Same date as A, six months later (no such date, e.g. a start on the 31st? Use that month's last day)	
(D) Qualifying day: from this end date they can claim unfair dismissal	C less one day	
(E) Last end date before six months	D less one day	
(F) Give notice by (hand it over in person)	E less notice B	
(G) Decision review	F less four weeks	
Probation end date	From the contract; aim for it to fall before G	
Right to work follow-up	Only if permission is time-limited; otherwise "n/a"	
Pension letter sent	Within six weeks of their start date	
Declaration of compliance	First employee only: within five months of duties start date	

These dates only affect ordinary unfair dismissal. They don't protect a dismissal linked to pregnancy, family leave, whistleblowing, health and safety, discrimination or a complaint the person has made.

> **Example.** Start 22 July 2026, one week's notice: C 22 Jan 2027; D 21 Jan; E 20 Jan; F 13 Jan; G 16 Dec 2026. Remember the margin: notice takes effect when received.

Review schedule

REVIEW	DATE BOOKED	HELD ON	SUMMARY SENT ON
Week 4			
Week 8			
Week 12			
Week 18			
Decision review (G)			