

Employment Rights Bill: Flexible working options won't have the impact businesses think

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Responding to the Employment Rights Bill announced today, Louise Shaw, Managing Director at resourcing transformation expert, Omni RMS, has suggested that access to flexible working hours won't have a huge impact on organisations:

“Any move to protect workers and allow for flexible working is welcome, particularly in such a skills short market. However, I would argue that the plans for flexibility aren't actually too different to the set up that many are already offering. In fact, our latest edition of the Resourcing and talent planning report – produced in conjunction with the CIPD – revealed that almost three quarters (74%) of employers are currently advertising at least some jobs as open to flexible working. For those in front line and non-office roles, 57% of employers already offer some form of flexible working. Businesses are also seemingly aware that these options are beneficial to employee engagement and hiring, with 71% of respondents acknowledging that offering home or hybrid working has allowed them to attract and retain more talent.

“Yes, there are some organisations urging people back into the office more often, however that doesn't necessarily mean that they aren't being flexible. What we're seeing is a clear recognition from the majority of employers that hybrid is valuable for attraction and retention strategies. And many are already implementing these models. As such, the plans to give individuals greater rights for flexible working from day one are unlikely to result in much change for most.

“Overall, the announcement today does signal a positive and proactive move towards the creation of a more sustainable and resilient workforce, but we are keen to see this focus on quality over quantity. The impact of these planned reforms will be driven by how they are implemented and the consultation period will be a prime opportunity for the voice of the business and employment communities to be heard to limit potential negative results.

“For example, the removal of the two-year qualifying period for unfair dismissal is designed to strengthen worker protections, but this could drive employers to rely more on temporary roles or adopt stricter hiring practices. UK employment protection has traditionally been weak compared to other OECD countries, but the UK performs relatively well on employment outcomes, including low unemployment rates and a high percentage of permanent roles. So, the Bill could lead to unintended consequences, such as fewer opportunities for young workers or those lacking experience, and the “temp-to-perm” pathway could also become more prevalent, risking a rise in job insecurity. It's a highly complex challenge to

address, but we are encouraged that we're moving in the right direction.”

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About Omni RMS

Omni RMS is an award-winning resourcing transformation specialist dedicated to helping organisations transform their approach to hiring and shift the dial in recruitment effectiveness. They help organisations to make recruitment work and enhance the value that TA teams bring to the overall business, driving growth. www.omnirms.com/

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All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,016 UK-based people professionals. Fieldwork was undertaken between 4 April 2024 and 22 April 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of UK employers by business size and sector.