

Upcoming changes to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and how to prepare

Looking after your people with good absence management

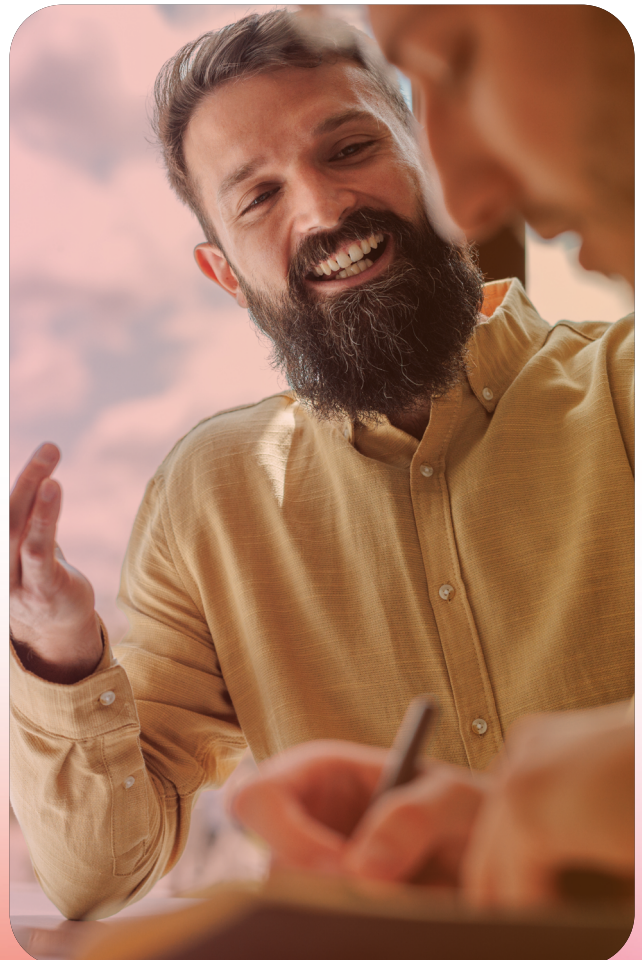
Supporting your employees' wellbeing is partly about offering benefits. It's also about following the right processes when they're unwell. Clear absence policies and correct sick pay practices help protect your people and your business.

That's why the upcoming Employment Rights Bill (ERB) matters for everyone. From April 2026, it's expected to bring the biggest shake up to SSP in years, making financial support more accessible and consistent for all workers.

Your current responsibilities

Right now, you have to:

- ✓ Pay SSP to eligible employees who are off work for four or more consecutive days (the first three days are 'waiting days').
- ✓ Only pay SSP to employees earning above the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) (currently £123 per week).
- ✓ Pay SSP at the flat weekly rate of **£116.75** (as of April 2024) for up to 28 weeks.
- ✓ Keep accurate absence and payroll records, and make sure fit notes are provided after seven calendar days.



What's expected to change from April 2026

Under the ERB, SSP will be more inclusive and accessible:

- ✓ **Day-one entitlement:** SSP will be payable from the **first day of sickness**, removing the current three-day waiting period.
- ✓ **All workers are eligible:** The LEL will be removed, so all employees qualify for SSP no matter their income.
- ✓ **Support for lower earners:** Employees earning below the flat-rate SSP will receive **80% of their average weekly earnings** or the standard SSP rate (whichever is lower).

These changes intend to make SSP fairer, particularly for lower-paid and part-time workers, and to encourage earlier sickness reporting and recovery support.

What you can do now to prepare

What you can do now to prepare:

- ✓ Review sickness and absence policies to make sure they fit with new rules
- ✓ Check HR and payroll systems can handle day-one SSP payments and removal of earnings thresholds
- ✓ Train managers on reporting, record-keeping, and communication during absences
- ✓ Budget for potential increase in SSP costs and review your company sick pay scheme if you offer one

The reforms are expected to take effect in April 2026, once the Employment Rights Bill becomes law.

