



Thrive Law Forum 2026: The Future of Inclusive Workplaces

Join the conversation: [#ThriveForum2026](https://twitter.com/ThriveForum2026)



With thanks to
our sponsors:



Welcome



I am really excited to welcome you to the Thrive Forum 2026. The world of work is evolving at an extraordinary pace. AI, automation and emerging technologies are reshaping how we recruit, manage performance and make decisions. But the most important question is not what we can build – it's who we include.

Progress only counts if it is inclusive.

Today brings together a carefully curated group of leaders who see inclusion not as compliance, but as strategy. If you are here, it's because your voice and perspective matter in this conversation. Technology has the power to remove barriers, increase access and create opportunity at scale. But it also has the potential to reinforce bias, exclude marginalised talent and widen inequality if we are not intentional. Responsible leadership means asking not just "Is this efficient?" but "Is this fair? Is this accessible? Is this human?"

This Forum is designed to be candid and practical. You'll hear legal insight on what employers need to know for 2026, explore real examples of inclusive technology in action and how technology can bridge the gap between accessibility and inclusion.

Most importantly, our roundtables will give you space to reflect, challenge and co-create solutions together. The real value of today lies in the experience and leadership around the tables. At Thrive Law, accessibility is a core principle. We are committed to creating psychologically safe spaces where open dialogue is welcomed and diverse perspectives are respected.

We are also proud to partner with CATCH Leeds, whose work empowering young people and strengthening communities aligns closely with our values. Your attendance today supports that important mission.

As we move through the morning, I encourage you to lean into the discussion, share openly, and think boldly about the future of inclusive and accessible workplaces.

Finally, a big thank you to our sponsors: Thomas International, our Headline Sponsor and our Awareness Sponsors Sarah McKenna and TryMosaic. Without you, these events wouldn't be possible.

Thank you for being here and for choosing to lead with intention.
Jodie Hill – Founder & Managing Partner, Thrive Law

Agenda

09:30 – 09:50: **Registration & Networking**

Ease into the day with coffee, conversation, and connection. Meet fellow professionals passionate about inclusion and wellbeing at work.

09:50 – 10:00: **Welcome from Jodie Hill**

10:00 – 10:05: **CATCH – About the Charity**

10:10 – 11:10: **Thrive Law – Employment Law Update: What You Need to Know for 2026**

Our legal experts share the latest developments and trends shaping the workplace and what employers must do to stay ahead.

11:10 – 11:30: **Morning Break**

Grab a drink, make new connections, and continue the conversation.

11:30 – 11:50: **Inclusive Technology in Action – Tania Martin**

11:50 – 12:10: **Inclusive Technology Panel hosted by Alicia Collinson – Jodie Hill, Tania Martin & Sam Buckley**

Lived experience and expert panel.

12:10 – 12:20: **Questions for Speakers and Panel**

12:20 – 13:10: **Roundtable Discussions hosted by Jodie Hill & Tania Martin**

Sharing best practices and reflections with the room.

13:10 – 13:15: **Reflections and Roundup**

Take a mindful moment to reflect on key takeaways and set your own inclusion and wellbeing goals for 2026.

13:15 – 14:00: **Networking & Lunch**

Enjoy a delicious lunch and continue building meaningful connections.

Join the conversation: #ThriveForum2026 | @Thrive_Law





Jodie Hill
Founder and Managing Partner, Thrive Law

Jodie Hill is a neurodivergent solicitor, ED&I consultant, training provider, author, and campaigner, who is passionate about employment law, mental health and wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) and neurodiversity. Jodie qualified as a barrister and was called to the bar in 2010 and later cross-qualified to become a solicitor in 2013. Following her mental breakdown in 2017, which she now calls her 'mental breakthrough,' Jodie founded Thrive Law in 2018, the first UK law firm with wellbeing and mental health at its core.



Today, Thrive Law, based in Leeds with teams in London and the Southwest, offers employment law support, HR services, Training, Commercial Law & Data, Coaching and Strategic Consultancy, both nationally and internationally with the aim to creating neuroinclusive environments where everyone can be their truest selves.

Recognised by the SRA, The Law Society, and ACAS, Jodie has received numerous prestigious awards for contributions to mental health, wellbeing, ED&I and social mobility in addition to the accomplishments of Thrive Law for excellence in employment law. Jodie is a frequent media contributor on platforms like Sky News and BBC. She is also a sought-after speaker at conferences on law, HR, and neurodiversity, known for her engaging style and ability to simplify complex topics.

Jodie is proudly neurodivergent, and she embraces it. She's a big fan of dopamine dressing and is rarely without one of her quirky fidget toys.



Alicia Collinson
Senior Associate, Thrive Law

Alicia is a Senior Associate Solicitor and Head of Training at Thrive Law, specialising in employment law, psychological safety and healthier workplace cultures. She supports and represents individuals in Employment Tribunal proceedings and strategically advises employer clients, giving her a sharp, balanced perspective on how workplace decisions affect real people.



Passionate about equality and modern leadership, Alicia is committed to challenging outdated workplace norms and championing environments where ambition and wellbeing can coexist.

Alongside her legal advice, she designs and delivers engaging, high energy training for leaders and HR teams, known for making complex issues accessible, practical and genuinely thought provoking.

Outside of law (because no one is just their job), she is a proud mum of two, a newbie runner who celebrates every kilometre like it is a marathon, a full volume musical theatre belter and an unapologetic pop culture nerd. She believes every environment works better when we can all be a little more ourselves.





Tom Stenner-Evans
Partner, Thrive Law

Tom's job title is 'Dad'. He is an expert in voicing characters from Bluey and Paddington, and he has over 5 years' experience of building dens out of duvets and dining room chairs. He is known in the industry for the quality of his marble runs.

Around those key responsibilities, he finds time to work with clients to help improve their HR offering and People Culture. In particular, he enjoys working with those organisations who are furthering a worthwhile cause and who are committed to establishing an inspiring and inclusive workplace culture. Tom is a vocal advocate of gender equality at work and speaks regularly about the vital role men need to play in lifting women up in the workplace. He doesn't like formal dress codes, 'working lunches' or fake wellbeing initiatives, and would like to see more women in leadership positions.



Tania Martin
PegSquared

Tania has implemented neuro-inclusive people processes, won two RAD awards with her team for neuro-inclusive recruitment, and has shared her insights as a keynote speaker, panellist, and a podcast guest with more than 10,000 people.

Everything Tania does is underpinned by a deep understanding of organisational dynamics built from two decades of corporate experience in leadership, process improvement, and people and operational roles. With a degree in Psychology, Tania knew she wanted a career with people in the centre.

So when it comes to creating organisational change, she knows what works and what doesn't.

But Tania also knows what it feels like to not fit in, and struggle because of neurodiversity. At 42, she was diagnosed with ADHD, yet her experience of support at work left her frustrated. Neurodiversity specialists lacked understanding of navigating the corporate landscape and were unable to meet her needs as an NCoE lead.

Through PegSquared, Tania is here to change that. Blending corporate expertise with her professional and personal insight, she can help you make a difference that reaches far beyond the individual.





CATCH, Leeds Charity Partner

CATCH is a registered charity in Leeds built through the dedication of an incredible team of volunteers, staff, and partners. Since its founding, CATCH has grown into a vital community hub, providing young people with opportunities in skill-building, volunteering, and education to help tackle challenges such as school exclusions and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) status.

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By fostering partnerships with education providers, local authorities, businesses, and community organisations, CATCH has created a collaborative approach to addressing complex social issues. The team's collective efforts have earned national recognition, including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and the 'Best Place for Children and Young People' award by Child Friendly Leeds.

The team have transformed a hotspot for anti-social behaviour and a disused modular building into a thriving centre featuring a community café, gym, training facilities, education provision, and an urban farm. More than 1,500 young people actively engage with CATCH, supported by 150 volunteers contributing over 20,000 hours annually.



Sam Buckley Thomas

Sam Buckley is a seasoned HR technology leader with more than 15 years of experience shaping commercial strategy and building high-performing sales organisations. Most recently, before joining Thomas, Sam served as Chief Sales Officer at elementsuite, where he played a pivotal role in scaling the business before its acquisition to Zellis in January 2025. With a career rooted in transforming how organisations use technology to unlock people's potential, Sam is particularly passionate about the new wave of AI and hyper-personalisation.

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He believes these innovations will fundamentally change how employers understand, engage and empower their workforce. Today, Sam brings this vision and deep industry expertise to his role as Vice President of Alliances at Thomas, forging partnerships that elevate the employee experience and deliver transformational business impact.

Why Thrive Law?



The **Impact** We Make

We go above and beyond to help guide the UK's most ambitious and progressive businesses.



The **Change** We Want To See

We're committed to building a fair, equitable and inclusive employment landscape where everyone can thrive.



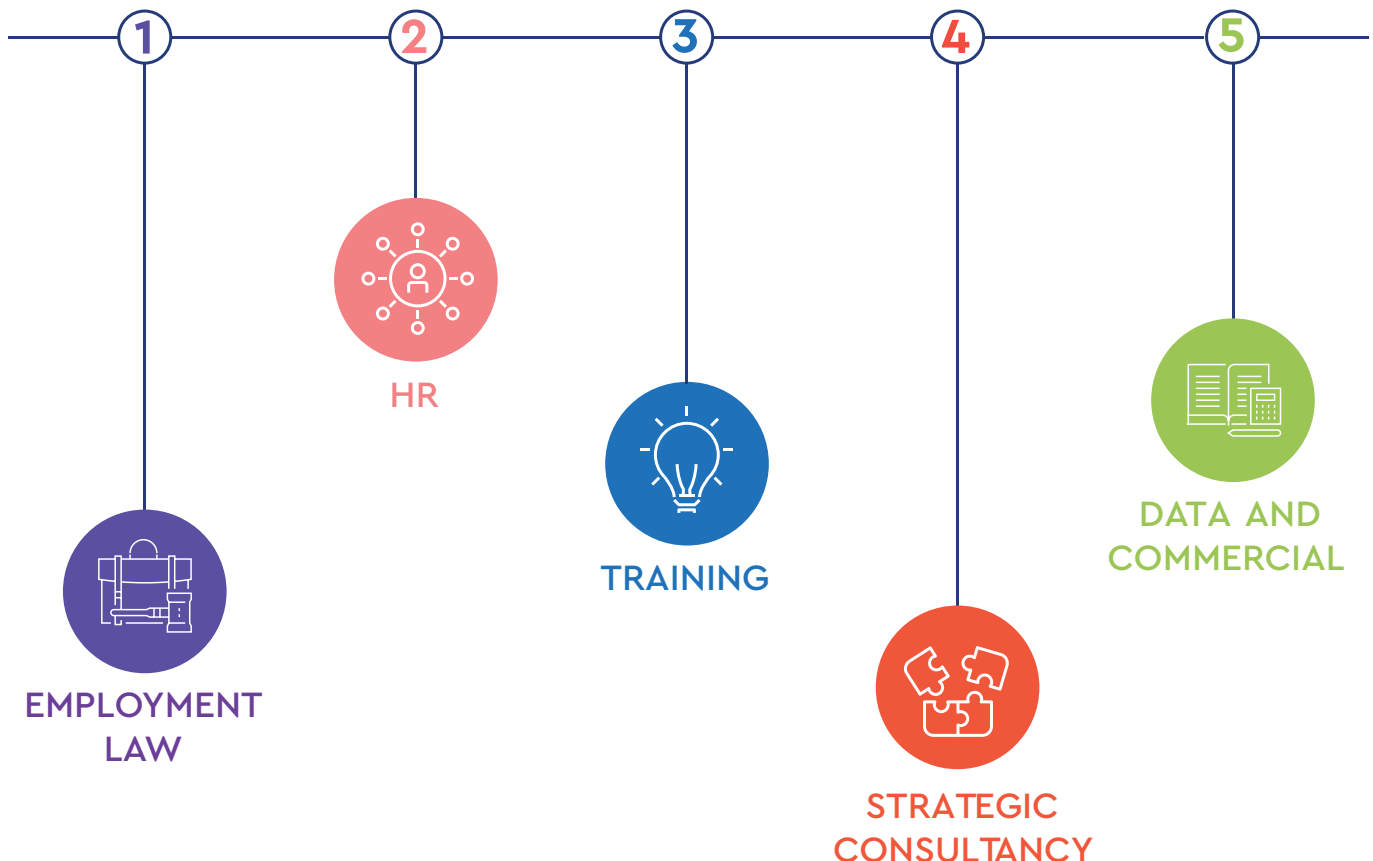
Our **Niche** Superpower

We're uniquely positioned to work with progressive leaders of people centred organisations.

Together, we're building a future where **inclusion** and **fairness** are the foundations of every workplace.



These are the five key areas we can support you with:



MAKE EVERY STAGE OF THE EMPLOYEE JOURNEY WORK FOR EVERY MIND



FROM RECRUITMENT TO RETENTION, WE HELP YOU EMBED NEURO-INCLUSION ACROSS THE EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE.

ABOUT PEGSQUARED

PegSquared is a neuro-inclusion consultancy helping organisations reshape systems, processes and leadership behaviours so neurodivergent employees can do their best work and progress in their careers.

Founded by Tania Martin, who built the UK's Neuro-Diverse Centre of Excellence at EY, PegSquared combines over 20 years of corporate transformation and people leadership expertise with lived neurodivergent insight.

WHAT WE DO



Train – Awareness, line-manager and practical skills training that changes day-to-day behaviour, not just ticks a box.



Consult – Neuro-inclusion audits, recruitment and policy redesign across the employee lifecycle, focused on clarity, consistency and outcomes.



Speak – Keynotes, panels and podcasts bringing together professional expertise and the realities of navigating complex organisational systems as a neurodivergent professional.

BENCHMARK YOUR RECRUITMENT FOR NEURO-INCLUSION

NEW

Report launching September 2026: the UK's first neurodiversity recruitment benchmark

- Confidential, free neuro-inclusion maturity score for your organisation.
- Online survey to complete in your own time – deadline July 2026.
- 50–100 organisations benchmarked across 10 key areas of the recruitment lifecycle.
- Early access to the full benchmarking report to be launched in September.
- Can be completed at country level to give you a global view.
- Designed for HR, Talent and DEI leaders serious about inclusive hiring.

Scan the QR code or email Tania to register your interest.

Meet Tania at this event and explore how PegSquared can support your organisation's neuro-inclusion journey.

✉ tania@pegsquared.co.uk

🌐 pegsquared.co.uk





Thank You to our Sponsors

We are grateful to our sponsors who help make this event possible. Their commitment to creating accessible and inclusive futures aligns with the values of the Thrive Law Forum 2026.

Get to know a bit more about each of them here:



Thomas Headline Sponsor

Thomas helps HR and people leaders make confident, data-led decisions across the employee lifecycle – from hiring and onboarding to development and retention. Our platform combines over 45 years of psychological expertise with intuitive tools that translate complex people data into actionable insight.

We assess behaviour, personality, aptitude, and emotional intelligence – and lead the charge on Connection Intelligence, helping you understand how people feel, function and relate at work.

By making people science accessible and practical for use in workplaces, Thomas empowers organisations to build more connected, engaged, and high-performing teams that thrive in today's changing world of work.

Know your people. **Build** a culture that thrives.

Thomas combines science-backed assessment data with **human-centred** AI to create hyper-personalised insights into how your people **think, work and communicate**.

This intelligence doesn't sit in a report, it's embedded directly into your HR systems and AI of choice, giving managers real-time, contextual guidance in the flow of work.

The result?

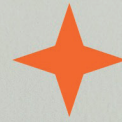
Better conversations, **stronger** relationships and teams that trust each other and **perform** at their best.

Make inclusion part of everyday leadership.

Discover how Thomas helps you build stronger working relationships, with individual identity at the heart.

with

 **thomas.co**



We Make Reasonable adjustments, Unreasonably Easy

Employees say what they need.
TryMosaic tells them what you
can offer.

See how it works:



trymosaic.co
The workplace adjustments platform



TryMosaic Awareness Sponsor

TryMosaic makes reasonable adjustments unreasonably easy, replacing what's often an ad hoc process with a repeatable, auditable one. Employees share their barriers, and TryMosaic surfaces relevant adjustments their employer can actually provide.

Managers get contextual guidance on what they can approve. HR gains a single system of record with real-time oversight, anonymised trend data and a documentation trail that holds up under scrutiny. No more scattered emails, lost handovers or invisible informal arrangements.

Designed with and for the people who actually use adjustments, for organisations that want to get this right in practice, not just on paper.

Join the conversation: #ThriveSummit2025



Sarah McKenna Awareness Sponsor

Sarah McKenna HR is a specialist HR recruitment and advisory business, helping organisations hire well and build stronger people functions.

Founded and led by Sarah McKenna, the business goes beyond traditional recruitment. Sarah works closely with employers to define the role properly, understand the culture and challenges behind it, and run a clear, structured search that supports confident decisions.

Alongside recruiting HR professionals across all levels and sectors, Sarah helps organisations improve how they hire through Recruitment Reviews, process design, and practical support for hiring managers. Her work focuses on clarity, consistency, and candidate experience, recognising that recruitment is often the first real signal of what it's like to work in a business.



HR recruitment that gets the right fit, not just the right CV.

Specialist HR Recruitment & Consultancy helping growing businesses hire with confidence:

- ✓ **Dedicated Search:** Targeted recruitment for HR professionals who strengthen your business and truly fit your culture.
- ✓ **The Recruitment Review:** A structured review of your hiring process to improve candidate experience, reduce hiring risk, and build manager confidence.

Recruitment isn't admin. When it's done well, everything else gets easier.



Take the **FREE Recruitment Assessment** to pinpoint the hidden gaps costing your business time and talent.



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EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT TRAINING FOR MANAGERS

Prepare Your Team for the
Employment Law Changes Ahead



With significant updates to the Employment Rights Act coming into force in 2026 and 2027, it's more important than ever that managers and decision-makers understand the practical implications, identify risk areas, and know how to prepare. Even small teams face increased risk in today's shifting litigation landscape.

Introducing our Employment Rights Act Manager Training Course

This course is designed specifically for:

- ✔ Business Owners
- ✔ Senior Leaders
- ✔ HR Decision Makers

You will gain:

- ✔ Clear, practical guidance on the upcoming legal changes
- ✔ Actionable strategies to mitigate risk within your team
- ✔ Confidence and preparation to navigate complex employment decisions

Forum attendees, register your interest now for the chance to **receive a special discount** on ERA Manager Training.



COMMERCIAL & DATA PROTECTION LEGAL SERVICES



Protect Your Business. Power Your Growth.

In today's fast-moving commercial landscape, legal risk isn't peripheral -it's strategic. From contracts and partnerships to data governance and digital compliance, organisations need legal clarity that protects performance and enables confident decision-making.

At Thrive Law, we combine commercial law expertise with data protection excellence, giving you practical, business-focused guidance in an increasingly regulated and digital world.

Why This Matters

Opportunity and risk now travel together.

New partnerships, evolving supply chains, technology innovation and AI-driven tools all carry legal and reputational exposure. At the same time, data sits at the heart of how organisations operate. With GDPR and rising regulatory expectations, compliance can't be an afterthought. Strong legal foundations create commercial agility.

Our Services

- Commercial Law
- Contract drafting, review and negotiation
- Supplier and partner agreements
- Strategic risk-based legal advice
- Dispute mitigation and resolution
- Technology and innovation agreements

Data Protection & Privacy

- GDPR compliance and practical support
- Privacy notices and data sharing agreements
- Training and awareness
- Breach preparedness and response

The Thrive Law Difference

- Business-First Advice – Legal insight aligned to your commercial strategy.
- Clear and Practical – No jargon. No ambiguity.
- Proactive Risk Prevention – Identify issues before they escalate.
- Human-Centred – Protecting both your organisation and the people within it.

The Impact

- Reduce legal uncertainty
- Strengthen contracts and partnerships
- Safeguard data and reputation
- Build trust with customers and employees
- Navigate complexity with confidence

Legal clarity isn't just protective – it's a competitive advantage.
Commercial confidence. Data clarity. Strategic advantage.

Ready to move forward with confidence? Let's talk.



Meet Rebecca



FREE AI AND DATA RISK CHECKLIST

Turn AI Opportunity into Responsible Practice

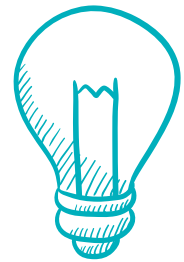
Artificial Intelligence is transforming business fast – from productivity tools to decision-support systems – but with innovation comes risk. While AI can unlock efficiency and insight, it also raises real legal, ethical and operational liabilities if used without clarity and governance. You can embrace AI, but you can't hand over responsibility for the decisions it influences.

Organisations increasingly use AI for everyday tasks and strategic decisions alike. Yet without a simple way to map where AI is being used and what it affects, risk can grow unknowingly, especially when AI touches people's rights, employment decisions, or commercial commitments.

That's why we've created a practical one-page AI Risk Checklist, a tool for business leaders, HR professionals and governance teams who want to use AI with confidence and control.

What It Includes

- ✓ Identify all places AI is used
- ✓ Assess risk levels: from low-impact admin to high-risk decisions
- ✓ Build meaningful human oversight and accountability
- ✓ Safeguard fairness, transparency and inclusion
- ✓ Ensure proper governance and documentation
- ✓ Sense-check AI recommendations before acting



The checklist helps you ask the right questions, spot high-risk AI use, and embed safeguards that protect your people, reputation, and business, without stifling innovation.

Why It Matters

AI can be a force for good, but only when you understand risks and manage them responsibly. Decisions influenced by AI that affect people's roles, rights or legal outcomes require careful oversight, and legal accountability always rests with your organisation. A simple framework, starting with this risk-based checklist, turns principle into practice, helping AI strengthen your organisation safely.

Who This Is For

CEOs & Board Members | HR & People Leaders | Legal, Compliance & Risk Teams
ED&I and Operational Decision-Makers

Whether you're just starting with AI or already deploying tools across your business, this checklist is a vital first step toward responsible AI adoption.

READ THE BLOG AND DOWNLOAD THE CHECKLIST

Gain clarity, protect your organisation and unlock AI's potential without compromise.



Employment Rights Act 2025: What Is Changing and What You Need To Do Now



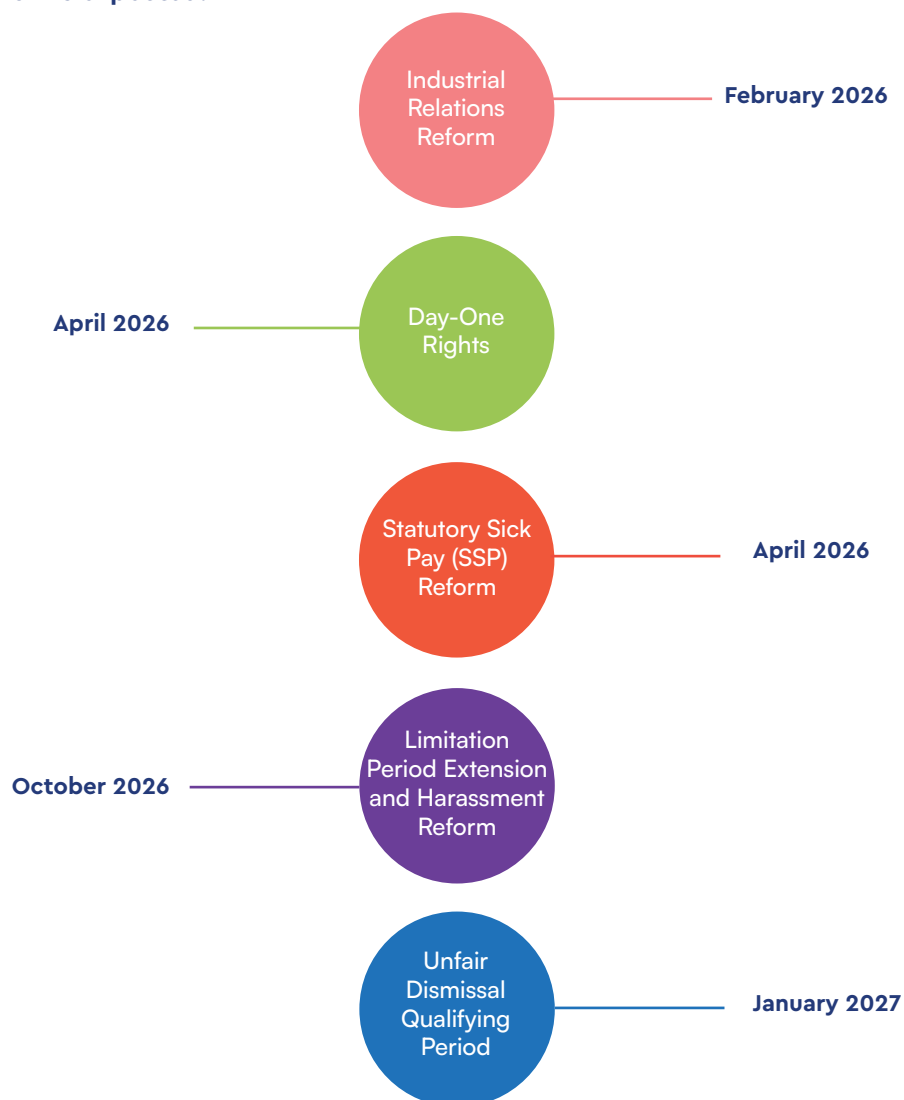
2026 is a significant year for employment law reform. The Employment Rights Act 2025 represents the most substantial shift in employment law in over two decades.

The changes will take effect in stages throughout 2026 and 2027 and will fundamentally reshape how employers manage probation, dismissal, sickness absence, flexible working, workforce planning and workplace culture. In practical terms, almost every aspect of an employer's people management framework will be affected in some way.

This is not just a legal update; it is a structural shift in how people processes are expected to operate and how decisions are made, evidenced and reviewed.

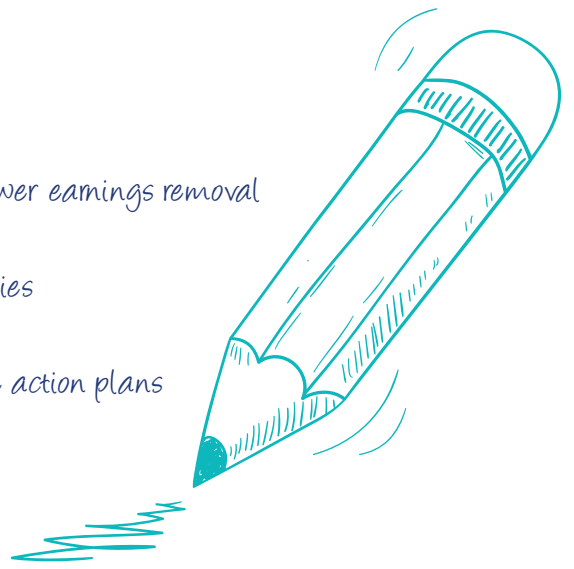
We are already working with our clients to ensure they are legally compliant, strategically prepared and operationally confident. Below, we have grouped the reforms by implementation date and, crucially, set out what this means for you and what action you should be taking now.

Roadmap of Key Reforms expected:



Employer Checklist

- Review employee contracts for day-one leave eligibility
- Update payroll and SSP systems for day-one payment and lower earnings removal
- Revise collective redundancy processes
- Audit and update whistleblowing and sexual harassment policies
- Train managers on new compliance obligations
- Draft or implement voluntary gender pay gap and menopause action plans
- Communicate upcoming changes to staff and leadership
- Create internal monitoring for compliance with new reforms



How We Help

As the Employment Rights Bill evolves, having a trusted legal partner is crucial to staying ahead and embedding best practice across your organisation. At Thrive Law, we are here to help you navigate the changes and ensure your policies, contracts, and processes are future-ready.

We work with employers to create tailored compliance roadmaps for April 2026 and beyond, including:

- Policy and contract updates
- Risk assessments and mitigation strategies
- Manager and employee training
- Implementation plans aligned with upcoming legislation

We're here to help you turn legal compliance into a competitive advantage and build workplaces where everyone can thrive.

Contact Us

- Speak directly to your dedicated Thrive employment law adviser to create your personalised roadmap; or
- Email our enquiries inbox: enquiries@thrivelaw.co.uk

What reforms are expected (Current Government timeline)

These are based on current information – this may change depending on the Bill which is currently at "ping pong" stage:

Timeline	Key Changes
February 2026	Trade union simplifications; protections for industrial action.
April 2026	Collective redundancy protective award change; Day 1 parental rights; whistleblowing protection; SSP changes; voluntary gender equality/menopause action plans; trade union recognition simplification, establishment of the Fair Work Agency.
August 2026	Electronic and workplace balloting for trade union.
October 2026	Fair Pay Agreement body regs; procurement code; tighter tipping law; trade union access and info duties; sexual harassment prevention duties changes; protections for trade union reps; industrial action detriment protections.
October 2026 (no earlier than)	Extended employment tribunal time limits.
January 2027	Unfair dismissal qualifying period reduced to six months; fire-and-rehire protections begin.

February
2026

Industrial Relations Reform

From 18 February 2026, key changes to trade union legislation take effect.

These include:

- ✔ Simplified industrial action balloting and notification requirements
- ✔ New statutory protections for workers participating in protected industrial action
- ✔ Removal of the picketing supervisor requirement
- ✔ Repeal of the Strikes Minimum Service Levels Act 2023

Later in 2026, further reforms are expected to simplify union recognition processes and introduce enhanced trade union access to workplaces.

What this means for employers

Where trade unions are recognised, engagement is likely to increase and the procedural barriers to industrial action will be lower. Industrial action may therefore become easier to organise. Communication missteps, particularly during periods of organisational change, can escalate quickly.

Even in non unionised workplaces, it will be important to understand the new framework. Poor handling of consultation or change management can increase legal exposure and, in some cases, encourage union activity where it did not previously exist.

What you should be doing now

- ✔ Review your consultation and collective bargaining frameworks to ensure they are structured and properly documented
- ✔ Ensure senior leaders and managers understand lawful communication during disputes and organisational change
- ✔ Stress test your approach to restructuring, redundancy and contractual variation
- ✔ Avoid informal or rushed consultation processes that could later be challenged

How we can support you

- ✔ Review of union engagement and consultation structures
- ✔ Leadership training on lawful communication and industrial relations risk
- ✔ Strategic support during disputes or negotiations
- ✔ Early stage planning advice where change is anticipated

April
2026

Day-One Rights

From April 2026, several key rights become available from day one of employment, including statutory sick pay and parental and paternity leave.

Statutory Sick Pay Reform | Changes expected from April 2026 include:

- ✔ Removal of waiting days
- ✔ Removal of the Lower Earnings Limit requirement
- ✔ SSP payable from day one
- ✔ A revised rate structure – with low earners paid 80% of their wages

Flexible Working

This will include expanded rights to request a contractual variation, aligned with the new statutory Code of Practice (which has not yet been finalised).

Whistleblowing Protection

Disclosures relating to sexual harassment will explicitly qualify for protection under the whistleblowing framework, exposing employers to further legal risk if they handle accusations incorrectly.

Fair Work Agency

The Fair Work Agency will be established in April 2026 within the Department for Business and Trade. It is expected to have enforcement powers in relation to national minimum wage, SSP and holiday pay compliance, including the ability to bring Tribunal claims on behalf of workers. These powers have not, however, been enabled or clarified yet.

What this means for employers

Your systems must be ready.

Absence management, parental leave and flexible working requests will need to be handled lawfully from the very start of employment. Payroll systems and contracts must align with the new SSP framework.

The common thread across these reforms is manager capability. Most legal risk will arise not from policy wording, but from inconsistent or poorly evidenced decision making at line manager level.

Where the real risk sits

- ✔ Informal sickness conversations without documentation
- ✔ Inconsistent flexible working decisions
- ✔ Managers rejecting requests without clear business reasons
- ✔ Failure to consider reasonable adjustments from the outset

What you should be doing now

- ✔ Audit your policies to ensure they reflect Day-One Rights
- ✔ Review payroll and SSP processes in advance of implementation
- ✔ Train managers on handling early-stage absence and flexible working consistently and lawfully
- ✔ Ensure reasonable adjustments are considered from day one of employment

How we can support you

- ✔ Full policy and handbook audit
- ✔ Contract and SSP framework updates
- ✔ Flexible working procedure redesign
- ✔ Manager training focused on lawful, consistent decision-making
- ✔ Advice on complex or sensitive cases

We will be hosting dedicated manager training sessions focused on absence management, flexible working and early stage risk. For smaller organisations, we are exploring open courses in addition to in house sessions. You can register your interest here: www.thriveforum.co.uk/era-manager-training/

October
2026

Limitation Period Extension and Harassment Reform

From October 2026, the limitation period for most Employment Tribunal claims increases from three months to six months. This is incredibly significant, as time limits are a common reason for a claim to fail from a disgruntled employee.

At the same time, strengthened harassment protections are expected to be implemented, including:

- ✔ A duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment
- ✔ Extended liability for harassment by third parties

What this means for employers

The risk window has effectively doubled.

Employers will face a longer period of uncertainty following dismissals, grievances or alleged discriminatory acts. Matters that might previously have timed out could now proceed to Tribunal.

The strengthened harassment provisions move employers from a reactive model to a proactive duty to prevent harassment. Having a policy will not be enough; employers will need to evidence the steps taken to prevent issues arising.

Where the real risk sits

- ✔ Weak or inconsistent investigation processes
- ✔ Poor record keeping
- ✔ Policies that exist but are not embedded in practice
- ✔ Managers who are unsure how to escalate concerns

What you should be doing now

- ✔ Review documentation standards across performance, absence and grievances
- ✔ Conduct harassment risk assessments
- ✔ Ensure reporting channels are clear and trusted
- ✔ Train managers on early risk identification and escalation of issues

How we can support you

- ✔ Audit of investigation and documentation processes
- ✔ Grievance and disciplinary procedure review
- ✔ Harassment risk assessments and action plans
- ✔ Inclusive and bystander training
- ✔ Support with trauma informed investigations

January
2027

Probation, Unfair Dismissal, Zero-Hours Reform and Fire and Rehire Restrictions

Several of the most significant reforms are expected to take effect in April 2027.

Unfair Dismissal Qualifying Period

This will be reduced from two years to six months. The significance of this cannot be understated; it means that employers will have less than half the time to figure out if someone is competent or just the right fit before full unfair dismissal protection applies.

The Act also introduces a statutory probationary period, referred to as the initial period of employment, during which a modified fairness test will apply.

Zero Hours and Low Hours Reform | Workers on qualifying zero-hours or low-hours contracts will gain:

- ✔ A right to guaranteed hours reflecting actual working patterns
- ✔ A right to reasonable notice of shifts
- ✔ Compensation for short notice cancellation

Fire and Rehire Restrictions

Dismissals for refusing contractual variation will be automatically unfair unless the employer can demonstrate that the variation was necessary to address financial difficulties and could not reasonably have been avoided.

What this means for employers

The reduction in the qualifying period significantly increases early stage litigation risk. Probation frameworks must be robust. Onboarding must be structured, expectations must be clear, and performance or conduct conversations must happen early and be properly documented.

Variable hours arrangements will require careful workforce planning and alignment between contractual terms and actual working patterns. Informal approaches to contractual variation will carry greater legal risk. Manager capability will be central. Most unfair dismissal and discrimination risk under the new framework will arise from early stage decisions that are not well evidenced.

Where the real risk sits

- ✔ Mishandled probation dismissals
- ✔ Delayed performance conversations
- ✔ Working patterns that do not match contracts
- ✔ Rushed or poorly evidenced contractual variation exercises

What you should be doing now

- ✔ Audit probation processes immediately
- ✔ Ensure structured onboarding and review meetings are in place
- ✔ Review casual worker arrangements
- ✔ Tighten consultation and change management protocols
- ✔ Train managers to assess suitability early

Waiting until 2027 to think about probation is too late – the employees you hire NOW will have enhanced rights in April 2027.

How we can support you

- ✔ Design and implementation of structured probation frameworks
- ✔ Manager playbooks and onboarding redesign
- ✔ Review of casual worker and low hours contracts
- ✔ Strategic advice before organisational change decisions are made
- ✔ Drafting of consultation documents and communications

We will be launching dedicated management training during 2026 to prepare organisations ahead of the qualifying period reduction. Smaller organisations can register interest in shared training courses: <https://www.thrivelaw.co.uk/era-manager-training/>

A Key Opportunity and a Key Risk

The Employment Rights Act 2025 presents a genuine opportunity to modernise people processes and strengthen organisational culture.

However, poor implementation will increase litigation exposure, regulatory scrutiny and reputational risk. The greatest exposure under the new regime will arise from:

- ❑ Early stage dismissal decisions
- ❑ Poor documentation
- ❑ Inconsistent management practice
- ❑ Outdated policies
- ❑ Informal change management

This is not simply about compliance; it is about process design and leadership capability.

Our Strategic Approach

We are offering:

- ❑ A full Employment Rights Act compliance audit
- ❑ A personalised preparation roadmap
- ❑ Phased implementation planning across 2026 and 2027
- ❑ Bespoke policy and contract updates
- ❑ Leadership and management training
- ❑ Ongoing HR and legal support

We are also hosting:

- ❑ A dedicated webinar series
- ❑ A Spring FAQ resource
- ❑ Forum and Roundtable discussions in Leeds
- ❑ Manager focused training courses, both in house and open enrolment for smaller organisations

If you would like to discuss what these reforms mean for your organisation, or to register interest in our upcoming training programmes, please get in touch with us here at Thrive or scan the QR code below.

Register your interest now to receive full details on our Employment Rights Act Manager Training



Sign up to our monthly newsletter:
To receive important updates, useful insights and be kept up to date with Thrive Law news. Click [here](#) to sign up.

UNLOCK INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES WITH THE REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TOOLKIT

Practical guidance to support neurodivergent employees and build truly inclusive workplaces.

Neurodiversity isn't a niche issue – it's a business imperative. Around 15–20% of the workforce may be neurodivergent, bringing strengths in creativity, innovation and problem-solving. Without the right support, however, talented individuals can face avoidable barriers at work.

That's why we created the Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit – a practical, easy-to-use resource for employers and people leaders committed to meaningful inclusion.

What's Inside:

- ✓ Clear guidance on what "reasonable adjustments" are and why they matter under UK employment law
- ✓ Practical examples to improve focus, accessibility and performance
- ✓ Templates and conversation starters to implement adjustments with confidence
- ✓ Insight into how inclusive practices benefit whole teams and organisational culture

Whether you're developing a neuroinclusive strategy, updating policies or supporting individuals day-to-day, this toolkit helps you move from intention to action.

Who It's For:

HR professionals | ED&I leads | People managers | Senior leaders | Anyone committed to accessible workplaces

If you're serious about inclusion, this toolkit will help you embed it ethically, practically and lawfully.

Download the Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit today and start unlocking potential across your organisation.



16 OCTOBER 2026

ANNUAL THRIVE SUMMIT 2026



Employment Law & Workplace Trends: Human Centred Legal Strategy

Join Thrive Law for a practical, forward-thinking event where our lawyers deliver key legal updates through a human-centred lens, exploring not just what has changed, but the real impact those changes have on your people, culture and leadership as well as the intersectionality with inclusion and AI.

This summit goes beyond theory and legal updates. We will take a detailed look at:

- What's changed in employment law (and whats coming!)
- What it means for your organisation and how best to prepare
- The human impact of those changes, with a lens on inclusion
- The practical steps you can take immediately and in the longer term
- How to plan strategically for what's coming next

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With a significant increase in neurodiversity-related claims, continued complex evolution of trans rights, and greater focus on life events and women's health at work, organisations must think differently about risk, inclusion and culture.

The day combines knowledge updates, a live expert legal panel where you can ask your questions directly, and in-depth practical workshops designed for real-world application.

By attending, you will:

- ✔ Gain clarity on the latest employment law updates and what they mean in practice
- ✔ Ask your own legal questions directly to an expert panel
- ✔ Understand the human impact of legal change through an inclusion lens
- ✔ Learn how to proactively address the increase in neurodiversity and women's health related claims
- ✔ Strengthen your confidence in managing sensitive and complex workplace issues
- ✔ Leave with practical, actionable steps you can implement immediately
- ✔ Develop a forward-looking plan to reduce risk and build a thriving culture



Join the conversation: [#ThriveForum2026](#)



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



THRIVE LAW ROUNDTABLES

02APR26

An invite-only space designed for open, honest discussion around the people challenges shaping today's workplaces.

06JUL26

Thrive Law is bringing together a select group of progressive leaders for our quarterly, in-person roundtable – an invite-only space designed for open, honest discussion around the people challenges shaping today's workplaces.

01OCT26

This is not a panel. Not a presentation.

Just real conversations with leaders who care about creating truly inclusive, future-focused cultures.

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ON OUR
WEBSITE

ANNUAL THRIVE LAW SUMMIT 2026

16OCT26

SAVE THE DATE

Workplace law is evolving rapidly – but legal compliance alone is no longer enough. This will be delivered in an open, inclusive and supportive space – designed to give you confidence, clarity and practical tools you can implement straight away.

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MONTHLY LUNCH TIME WEBINARS

01APR26

Keep up to date with Employment Law updates as they happen with our monthly lunch time webinars. See our events page on our website for more information.

06MAY26

03JUN26

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Technology Guide for Neurodiversity

Start with the challenge, not
the tool



If This Is Bothering Me....

Technology That Can Help



This is a practical guide to bridge the gap between neurodivergent needs and workplace demands using readily available technology.

The Design Rule:

Any technology that claims to support neurodivergent people must require less executive function to use than the task it is supporting. Otherwise it just adds to the load.

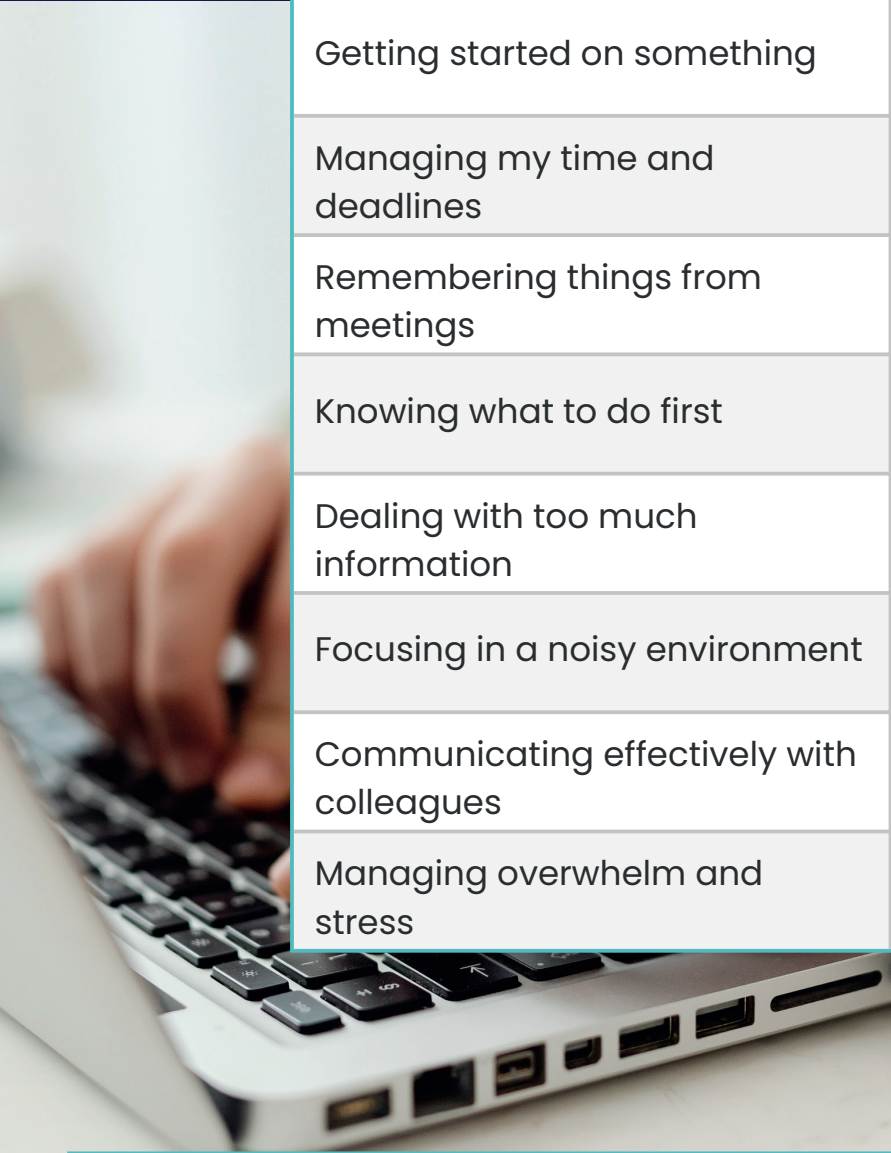
How to use this guide

Start with the challenge, not the tool. Find the section that describes what you or your colleague is experiencing, then explore the technology options. Not every tool will suit every person. The goal is to find the one or two things that make the biggest difference and build from there.

All tools listed here are either built into Windows, macOS, iOS or Android, included in standard Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace licences, or available as free apps. Nothing here requires specialist procurement or Access to Work funding, though these solutions complement specialist tools well.

Quick Reference:

"I need help with..."



"I need help with..."	Go to...
Getting started on something	Section 1: Task Initiation
Managing my time and deadlines	Section 2: Time Perception
Remembering things from meetings	Section 3: Working Memory
Knowing what to do first	Section 4: Prioritisation
Dealing with too much information	Section 5: Information Overload
Focusing in a noisy environment	Section 6: Concentration and Focus
Communicating effectively with colleagues	Section 7: Communication Differences
Managing overwhelm and stress	Section 8: Emotional Regulation

Remember

Start with one tool, trial it for a week, then assess. Your toolkit will evolve. What doesn't work now might be perfect later. Progress over perfection, always.

PegSquared | tania@pegsquared.co.uk

1. Task Initiation: "I know what to do but I can't start"

The gap between knowing and doing. The task is clear, the information is available, but beginning feels impossible. Often misread as laziness or lack of motivation.

What it feels like:

- Staring at a blank document for hours
- Cleaning the kitchen instead of starting the report
- Needing someone to "just get me going"
- Paralysis when a task feels too big or unclear
- Starting and restarting repeatedly without making progress

Tool	How it helps
AI chat tools (Copilot, ChatGPT, Gemini)	Ask "help me break this task into five small steps" or "what's the first sentence of this email?" to lower the activation barrier
Microsoft To Do - My Day view	Curate a short daily list so the brain isn't overwhelmed by the full backlog
Microsoft Loop / Google Docs	Dump ideas without structure first, then cluster and organise. Removes the pressure of starting "properly"
Copilot in Word	Generate an outline from a brief or messy notes so you're editing, not creating from scratch
Pomodoro / Focus timer apps	Commit to just 5 minutes. The timer creates a low-stakes starting point
Voice notes (phone)	Talk through what you'd say before writing it. Bypasses the blank-page paralysis

2. Time Perception: "I genuinely thought that would take an hour"

Time blindness means internal estimates of duration are unreliable. An hour can feel like ten minutes during hyperfocus or three hours during a tedious task. Deadlines arrive as surprises.

What it feels like:

- Consistently underestimating how long things take
- Being shocked when the day is over
- Missing deadlines despite good intentions
- No sense of how long has passed during deep work
- Rushing everything at the last minute

Tool	How it helps
Outlook / Google Calendar time-blocking	Assign realistic time blocks to tasks, including transition time and buffer. Colour-code by type (deep work, admin, meetings)
Toggl / Clockify (free time trackers)	Track actual time spent vs estimated to build self-awareness over weeks
AI chat tools	Ask "how long would this realistically take someone?" before committing to deadlines
Viva Insights (Microsoft)	Meeting overload alerts flag when the calendar is unsustainable. Focus time suggestions protect deep work
Visual countdown timers (Pomofocus, phone apps)	Externalise the passage of time so it becomes visible, not just felt
Recurring calendar reminders	Set prep-time reminders, not just deadline reminders. "Meeting in 30 minutes" rather than just the meeting itself

07

3. Working Memory: "I forgot we agreed that"

The brain's RAM is limited. Holding multiple pieces of information while acting on them means things get dropped. Commitments made in meetings evaporate. Context switches wipe the mental slate.

What it feels like:

- Walking into a room and forgetting why
- Losing track of action points from meetings
- Needing to re-read emails multiple times
- Forgetting what you were doing after an interruption
- Feeling like your brain has too many tabs open

Tool	How it helps
Teams / Google Meet transcripts and recordings	Automatic capture of everything said so nothing relies on memory alone
Copilot meeting recap (if available)	AI-generated summary of decisions, action points and follow-ups from any Teams meeting
OneNote (sticky notes) / Google Keep	One place to capture thoughts immediately. Quick-capture is essential so ideas aren't lost in the moment
Microsoft To Do linked to Outlook	Flag emails as tasks so commitments don't live only in the inbox
Shared task boards (Planner, Trello)	External, visible commitments that the whole team can see and reference
AI chat tools	Paste meeting notes and ask "what are the action points from this?" to extract commitments you may have missed

4. Prioritisation: "Everything feels equally urgent"

Without reliable internal ranking, every task competes for attention at the same volume. The result is either paralysis (can't choose) or busy-work (doing easy things while important things wait).

What it feels like:

- Working hard all day but nothing important gets done
- Jumping between tasks without finishing any
- Spending two hours on a low-stakes email
- Not knowing what to do first
- Feeling busy but unproductive

Tool	How it helps
Microsoft To Do - priority flags and My Day	Visual separation of urgent vs important. Choose three things for today, not thirty
Eisenhower Matrix templates (Notion, Miro)	Simple visual framework: urgent/important quadrant to force ranking
AI chat tools	Share your task list and ask "help me prioritise these based on deadline and impact." The AI forces the ranking conversation
Outlook categories and rules	Auto-sort incoming emails so the inbox is pre-triaged before you even look at it
Viva Insights weekly digest	Shows where your time actually went vs where you planned it to go
Copilot Pages / Loop	Weekly planning ritual: paste everything in, ask AI to help sequence and estimate

5. Information Overload: "I can't process all of this"

Dense text, long emails, complex documents and information-heavy environments overwhelm processing capacity. The problem isn't comprehension; it's volume and format.

What it feels like:

- 4,000 unread emails and rising
- Reading the same paragraph five times
- Missing key information buried in long documents
- Avoiding emails because opening them feels overwhelming
- Needing information in a different format to process it

Tool	How it helps
Immersive Reader (Word, Outlook, Edge, Teams)	Strips away visual clutter, adjusts spacing, changes background colour, reads text aloud. Available across Microsoft 365
Copilot email summarisation	"Summarise this email thread in three bullet points" instead of reading twenty messages
Read Aloud (Word, Outlook, Edge)	Converts text to speech so you can listen rather than read. Helps auditory processors
Outlook Focused Inbox and rules	Automatically separates important emails from noise
AI chat tools for summarisation	Paste any document and ask "give me the key points" or "what do I actually need to do?"
Text-to-speech	Listen to any content on mobile devices
Colour filters and display adjustments	Reduce visual stress through colour overlays, dark mode, or adjusted contrast

6. Concentration and Focus: "I can't block out the noise"

Open-plan offices, notification pings, visual movement and unpredictable interruptions fragment attention. For people with sensory sensitivities, the environment actively impairs cognitive function.

What it feels like:

- Every conversation in the office pulling your attention
- Unable to think when someone is eating nearby
- Losing your train of thought every time a notification pings
- Needing complete silence to do complex work
- Exhaustion from the effort of filtering out background stimuli

Tool	How it helps
Focus Assist / Do Not Disturb (Windows, macOS, iOS, Android)	Silences all non-essential notifications during deep work periods
Teams noise suppression	High-fidelity filtering removes background chatter. The solo meeting trick: join a Teams meeting alone to activate noise suppression at your desk
Viva Insights focus time	Automatically blocks protected focus time on your calendar and silences Teams during those blocks
Noise-masking apps (myNoise, Noisli, Brain.fm)	Consistent ambient sound that masks unpredictable environmental noise
Guided Access (iOS) / App Pinning (Android)	Lock the device to a single app to prevent self-distraction
Reduce Animations / Reduce Motion (all OS)	Minimises visual distractions from screen transitions and movement

7. Communication Differences: "We're speaking different languages"

Mismatches in processing speed, communication style and sensory preferences create friction between people. Fast thinkers dominate meetings. Implicit expectations go unspoken. Written and verbal strengths differ.

What it feels like:

- The meeting has moved on before you've formulated your response
- Delivering exactly what was asked but not what was meant
- Being told to "read the room" when the room is illegible
- Brilliant in writing but invisible in meetings (or vice versa)
- Exhausted from translating between your thinking style and the expected format

Tool	How it helps
Live captions and transcripts (Teams, Google Meet)	Real-time text supports auditory processing differences and creates a written record for slower processors to review
Meeting chat functions	Encourage written contributions during live meetings so people can contribute in their preferred mode
Shared agendas in advance	Gives processors time to prepare thoughts before the meeting, not during it
Loom / video messages	Asynchronous video for when real-time conversation isn't necessary. The recipient controls the pace
AI tools for tone and clarity	"Rewrite this email in a more diplomatic tone" or "make this briefing more explicit and specific"
Copilot for meeting preparation	"Based on this agenda, what questions should I prepare for?" reduces the on-the-spot processing demand

8. Emotional Regulation and Cognitive Overload: "I've hit the wall"

Executive functioning degrades under stress. The cumulative load of masking, compensating and managing sensory input depletes cognitive resources. When the wall hits, capacity collapses rather than gradually declines.

What it feels like:

- Going from fine to completely overwhelmed with no warning
- Knowing you need a break but not being able to stop
- Snapping at a colleague over something minor after hours of masking
- Complete shutdown after a sensory or social overload
- The Sunday dread of knowing Monday will drain everything

Tool	How it helps
Viva Insights wellbeing nudges	Prompts to take breaks, tracks quiet time, flags when working patterns are unsustainable
Calendar visibility tools	Colour-coded calendars make overload visible before it becomes a crisis. "I can see I have six hours of meetings tomorrow"
AI for triage	"I'm overwhelmed. Here's everything on my plate. Help me decide what can wait, what can be delegated, and what needs doing now"
Breathing and regulation apps (Calm, Headspace, built-in iOS/Android)	Quick sensory regulation between demanding tasks or after difficult interactions
Scheduled Do Not Disturb periods	Protected recovery time that's pre-booked and visible to colleagues
Flexible working tools (VPN, Teams, remote access)	The ability to work from a regulated environment when office demands become unsustainable



Meet Tania Martin

Tania Martin is the founder of PegSquared and a neuro-inclusion consultant, speaker, and trainer who helps leaders make sense of neurodiversity at work and implement practical, actionable changes. She previously led the UK's award-winning Neuro-Diverse Centre of Excellence at EY and has over 20 years' experience delivering complex people and technology transformation in global organisations. Diagnosed with ADHD in 2022, Tania brings lived insight alongside deep corporate expertise to help organisations move beyond awareness into action. Tania is also a finalist for the inaugural Neurodiverse Business Awards as Trailblazer of the Year.

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