

Law & Policy Group

# Global Legislative Update

By Stephanie Rosseau and Fiona Webster  
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# In this document

Mercer’s *Global Legislative Update* covers legal developments affecting retirement, health, executive rewards, talent, diversity and inclusion, and other HR programs that affect local and/or expatriate employees. Links to developments with upcoming effective dates covered in past updates are also included to remind employers of impending deadlines. These icons indicate whether employer action is required.

 Employer action required

 Potential implications for employers

 Developments to monitor

Please note: Mercer is not a law firm and therefore cannot provide legal advice. Please consult legal counsel before taking any actions based on the commentary and recommendations in this report.

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# Highlights

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Asia Pacific	
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<b>India</b>	<a href="#">National standards for workplace crèche/day care facilities issued</a>

AsiaPacific (continued)	
Japan	<a href="#">Discretionary work system rules adjusted</a> <a href="#">Overtime cap extended to more industry sectors</a> <a href="#">Employers' notification of employment terms to change</a>
New Zealand	<a href="#">Minimum wage increased on April 1</a>
Singapore	<a href="#">Employment Pass salary threshold to increase in 2025</a> <a href="#">Retirement and reemployment ages to increase</a>
South Korea	<a href="#">Child care leave scheme expanded</a>
Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)	
European Union	<a href="#">Rights of platform workers finalized</a>
Germany	<a href="#">Immigration rules for skilled foreign workers eased</a> <a href="#">Nearly half of health insurance funds increase supplementary contribution rates</a> <a href="#">Public pension reform bill published</a> <a href="#">Parental allowance eligibility reduced</a>
Greece	<a href="#">Minimum wage increased on April 1</a> <a href="#">Group pension plan reforms now effective</a>
Ireland	<a href="#">Employees have right to request remote and flexible working</a>
Israel	<a href="#">Health insurance contributions to increase in 2025</a>
Kenya	<a href="#">Collection of housing levy reinstated</a>
Mozambique	<a href="#">Revised labor law now effective</a>
Nigeria	<a href="#">Introduction of expatriate employment levy suspended</a>
South Africa	<a href="#">May 29 public holiday for elections announced</a> <a href="#">Tax guidance on fringe benefits, allowance updated</a> <a href="#">Earnings threshold increased</a> <a href="#">Consultation on sectoral numerical targets under employment equity law</a>
Spain	<a href="#">Protections for LGBTQ employees enacted</a>

## EMEA (continued)


**United Arab Emirates** [DIFC employers must make Qualifying Scheme pension contributions for employees who are UAE/GCC nationals](#)

**United Kingdom** [Minimum wage rates for 2024 announced](#)  
[National insurance rates reduced](#)  
[Stronger job protection from redundancy to be given to employees on maternity leave](#)  
[Employees will be able to annually take carers' leave](#)  
[Law makes it easier to request flexible working requests](#)  
[Some pension measures from Autumn Statement now effective](#)

## Section 2

# Global

Artificial Intelligence	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<b>Health</b> <b>Roundup: Global employer resources on artificial intelligence</b> Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become more of a permanent feature of the workplace for many employees and employers around the world and poses many challenges and considerations as it reshapes work. To help employers consider the issues associated with AI, the roundup cited below provides links to general information about ongoing legislative and governance initiatives and trends. Sources include Marsh McLennan, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated
Reproductive rights	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<b>Health</b> <b>Roundup: Global employer resources on reproductive rights post <i>Dobbs</i> ruling</b> In June 2022, the US Supreme Court's <i>Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization</i> decision overturned <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , finding no federal constitutional right to abortion and allowing states to regulate and ban abortions at all stages of pregnancy. To provide multinational employers some information on countries' positions on reproductive rights and the varying employee health benefit plan issues involved, the roundup cited below provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated
Minimum wage rates	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<b>Career</b> <b>Roundup: Global employer resources on minimum wage increases</b> To help multinational employers address the different minimum wage rates around the world, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources, and news articles.
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated



Remote working	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p><b>Career — Health — Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Countries address remote-working issues</b></p> <p>Remote working has become a more of permanent feature for many employees and employers after various countries introduced COVID-19 measures. Remote working poses challenges and considerations for employers devising or adjusting policies. Issues to consider include the definition of remote work, eligibility criteria, hybrid working arrangements, employee engagement and performance, cybersecurity, health and safety, the right to disconnect, the impact of employees relocating to a different country or state, and the post-pandemic return to the workplace. Several jurisdictions have introduced remote-working legislation that clarifies post-pandemic employer and employee requirements, and others are expected to follow suit. To help employers consider the issues associated with remote working, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from Marsh McLennan, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated



# Section 3

## Americas

Brazil (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Wealth</b> <b>PGBL, VGBL pension plans allow automatic enrollment</b> From April 1, 2024, employer-established pension plano gerador de benefício livre (PGBL) pension plan contracts can include a clause that allows for automatic enrollment by employees and executives. The measure is included in Resolution CNSP No. 463, issued on February 20, 2024. A PGBL plan is one type of private pension plan that individuals can join. The plan’s regulations must include the procedures for automatic enrollment, cancellation and withdrawal from the plan, fees, other conditions and the advantages of membership. Since Feb. 20, 2024, collective vida gerador benefício livre (VGBL) plan contracts can also include an autoenrollment provision under measures in Resolution CNSP No. 464. A VGBL plan is characterized as life insurance with a survival coverage clause.
Resources	<a href="#">Resolution CNSP No. 463</a> (Portuguese) (Official Diary, Feb. 19, 2024) and <a href="#">Resolution CNSP No. 464</a> (Portuguese) (Official Diary, Feb. 19, 2024)

Brazil (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Employers can automatically enroll employees in pension plans</b></p> <p>Employers can now automatically enroll newly hired employees into pension plans administered by closed supplementary pension entities (EFPCs) — previously, employees had to request their registration in a plan. The measures feature in CNPC Resolution 60 that took effect on March 1, 2024. Highlights include:</p> <p><b>Automatic enrollment</b></p> <p>Plan sponsors can now enroll employees in the benefit plan at the start of their employment, in accordance with the plan’s rules. Certain employee contribution requirements must be met, or the sponsor pays the full contribution without requiring any employee contribution.</p> <p>The automatic enrollment method must be included in the benefit plan’s regulations, and comprise the conditions, procedures, applicable deadlines and procedures for participants to withdraw from, or cancel, the plan.</p> <p>The EFPC must provide participants with an enrollment certificate, EFPC statute, benefit plan regulations and explanatory material in digital or paper format within 60 days of registration.</p> <p><b>Conventional enrollment</b></p> <p>The sponsor or the entity offers enrollment to the employee through a printed document, remote transaction, or voluntary payment of the first contribution. In this case, the EFPC must provide participants with an enrollment certificate, EFPC statute, benefit plan regulations and explanatory material — either in digital or paper format.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">CNPC Resolution 60</a> (Portuguese) (Official Diary, Feb. 7, 2024)
Canada (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><b>Legislation introduced for first phase of national universal pharmacare</b></p> <p>Recently introduced Bill C-64 proposes the foundational principles for the first phase of national universal pharmacare. It also describes the Government of Canada’s intent to work with provinces and territories to provide universal, single-payer coverage for a number of contraception and diabetes medications. The health minister also announced a plan to establish a fund to support Canadians’ access to supplies that diabetics require to manage and monitor their condition and administer their medication, such as syringes and glucose test strips.</p> <p>Additionally, Bill C-64 provides that the new Canadian Drug Agency develop a national formulary, a national bulk purchasing strategy and support the publication of a pan-Canadian strategy regarding the appropriate use of prescription medications.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Government of Canada introduces legislation for first phase of National Universal Pharmacare</a> (Government of Canada, Feb. 29, 2024) and <a href="#">Bill C-64</a> (Parliament of Canada, Feb. 29, 2024)

Canada — Nova Scotia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career</b> <b>Minimum wage increased</b> The minimum wage increased to CA\$15.20/hour effective April 1, 2024, up from CA\$15/hour.
Resources	<a href="#">Minimum wage increasing on April 1 (Government, Jan. 3, 2024)</a>
Canada — Ontario (new)	
Status	 <b>Effective Oct. 1, 2024</b>
Development	<b>Career</b> <b>Minimum wage to increase</b> Ontario's government announced that it will increase its minimum wage to CA\$17.20/hour as of Oct. 1, 2024 — up from CA\$16.55/hour. This 3.5% increase is based on the consumer price index and brings Ontario's minimum wage to the second highest in Canada.
Resources	<a href="#">Ontario raising minimum wage to support workers (Government, March 28, 2024)</a>
Canada (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<b>Wealth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Pension super priority federal legislation enacted</a> — key date: April 27, 2027</li> </ul>
El Salvador (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Large employers will be required to provide day care facilities</a> — key date: June 2024</li> </ul>
Peru (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<b>Career</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">New national holiday honors air force heroes</a> — key date: July 23, 2024</li> </ul>

**United States (US) (updated)****Status****Currently effective****Development****Career****NLRB's joint-employer rule struck down by court**

The NLRB's joint-employer rule that was slated to be effective on March 11, 2024, has been struck down by a federal court in Texas. The judge held that the new rule "would be contrary to law," and the removal of the prior 2020 rule was "arbitrary and capricious." The Chamber of Commerce, who had challenged the rule, said the court's ruling "is a major win for employers and workers who don't want their business decisions micromanaged by the NLRB. It will prevent businesses from facing new liabilities related to workplaces they don't control, and workers they don't actually employ. The U.S. Chamber will continue to fight back against the NLRB and its campaign to promote unionization at all costs." The NLRB will likely appeal the ruling.

**Resources**


[US Chamber wins lawsuit over NLRB joint employer rule](#) (Chamber of Commerce, March 9, 2024)



**US (new)****Status****Currently effective****Development****Wealth****Guidance on SECURE 2.0's terminal illness distributions issued**



IRS Notice 2024-2 provides guidance on "terminally ill individual distributions" (TIIDs), which are eligible for a new exception under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 72(t) to the 10% penalty tax on retirement plan withdrawals before age 59-1/2. Added to the IRC by the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-38), the exception applies to distributions made on or after Dec. 29, 2022, to participants with a physician-certified terminal illness reasonably expected to result in death within seven years. IRS plans to issue regulations under Section 72(t) that will include additional guidance on this and other exceptions to the early withdrawal penalty added to the IRC in recent years.



**Resources**

[brian.kearney@mercerc.com](mailto:brian.kearney@mercerc.com), [margaret.berger@mercerc.com](mailto:margaret.berger@mercerc.com) and [matthew.calloway@mercerc.com](mailto:matthew.calloway@mercerc.com)  
[GRIST](#), March 20, 2024



US (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>House approves bill to let 403(b) plans invest in collective trusts</b></p> <p>Bipartisan legislation to make securities law changes so 403(b) plans can offer collective investment trusts (CITs) passed the House on March 8 as part of a larger package of securities law reforms (HR 2799). The CIT-related changes appear in a section entitled the Retirement Fairness for Charities and Educational Institutions Act of 2024. While the outlook for Senate action on the measure is uncertain, supporters hope the changes will stick in any final securities legislation Congress might approve later this year.</p> <p>Widely used by 401(k) plans, CITs are a type of pooled investment vehicle similar to mutual funds. Before enactment of the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328), neither the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) nor federal securities laws allowed 403(b) custodial accounts to offer CITs. The SECURE 2.0 Act amended the tax law, but Congress couldn't agree on the changes to federal securities laws, so CITs are still unavailable to 403(b) plans for the time being.</p> <p>The legislation would specifically amend relevant securities laws to permit 403(b) plans to invest in CITs if the plans are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subject to Title I of ERISA</li><li>• Governmental plans in which a plan fiduciary, employer or person acting on behalf of the employer reviews and approves each investment offering</li><li>• Sponsored by an employer that has agreed to serve as a fiduciary for selecting the plan's investments</li></ul> <p>The bill would make similar securities law changes for 403(b) plan investments in unregistered insurance company separate accounts. However, the IRC's investment restrictions for 403(b) custodial accounts would remain in place.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:geoff.manville@mercer.com">geoff.manville@mercer.com</a>; <a href="mailto:margaret.berger@mercer.com">margaret.berger@mercer.com</a> and <a href="mailto:matthew.calloway@mercer.com">matthew.calloway@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">GRIST</a>, March 14, 2024</p>

US (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Wealth</b> <b>DOL, IRS issue guidance on DC plan emergency savings accounts</b> Recent DOL and IRS guidance address many — but not all — key implementation issues for the new pension-linked emergency savings accounts (PLESAs) under the SECURE 2.0 Act (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328). DOL's guidance takes the form of 20 wide-ranging FAQs posted on the agency's website covering multiple aspects of PLESA administration. IRS's guidance in Notice 2024-22 focuses on reasonable measures sponsors can take to limit employees' manipulation of the employer match on PLESA contributions. IRS accepted written comments on its notice through April 5, and both agencies have indicated that more PLESA guidance is coming.
Resources	<a href="mailto:brian.kearney@mercer.com">brian.kearney@mercer.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:margaret.berger@mercer.com">margaret.berger@mercer.com</a> ; and <a href="mailto:matthew.calloway@mercer.com">matthew.calloway@mercer.com</a> <a href="#">GRIST</a> , March 8, 2024
US (new)	
Status	 <b>Comments can be submitted until April 22, 2024.</b>
Development	<b>Wealth</b> <b>Agencies launch SECURE 2.0 reporting and disclosure review</b> A new triagency request for information (RFI) seeks stakeholder input on the effectiveness of existing reporting and disclosure requirements for retirement plans under ERISA and the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Section 319 of the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) charges the Treasury Department, DOL, and Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (PBGC) with reviewing these requirements and providing findings and recommendations to Congress by Dec. 29, 2025.
Resources	<a href="mailto:margaret.berger@mercer.com">margaret.berger@mercer.com</a> and <a href="mailto:matthew.calloway@mercer.com">matthew.calloway@mercer.com</a> <a href="#">GRIST</a> , Feb. 14, 2024



US	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer resources on DOL’s final independent contractor rule</b></p> <p>On Jan. 9, 2024, the DOL announced a final rule that revises how to determine if an individual is an independent contractor or an employee entitled to minimum wage, overtime and other protections under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. The controversial rule took effect on March 11, 2024.</p> <p>To provide employers with some information about the rule and the varying aspects and issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. The content also does not necessarily reflect Mercer’s or the authors’ point of view on the subject.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup: Employer resources on DOL’s final independent contractor rule</a> (Mercer, regularly updated)
US	
Status	 <b>Effective dates vary.</b>
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>User’s guide to SECURE 2.0</b></p> <p>A dizzying array of legislation affecting DC and defined benefit (DB) plans became law on Dec. 29, 2022, as part of a fiscal 2023 government spending package. Capping several years of congressional efforts, the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) is intended to build on changes made by the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2019 (Div. O of Pub. L. No. 116-94).</p> <p>Navigating SECURE 2.0 is a formidable challenge. The statute consists of 120 pages of text and 90 individual sections — with no table of contents. To help employers and plan sponsors understand the legislation’s implications, this guide provides a high-level summary of SECURE 2.0 provisions grouped topically, including separate treatment of provisions specific to DC and DB plans.</p> <p>The six tables in this guide describe statutory changes and their effective dates, identify whether the changes are mandatory or optional for employers, and provide initial observations, including implementation challenges for which agency guidance would be helpful. The act also includes several apparent drafting errors for which Congress intends to introduce technical corrections legislation. Those errors are noted in the relevant sections of the guide.</p> <p>This guide doesn’t address SECURE 2.0’s employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) provisions and a handful of other nonbenefit-related provisions. When referring to the original SECURE Act, this guide uses the term “SECURE 1.0” to avoid any confusion between the laws.</p> <p>This guide will be updated periodically to reflect additional information and guidance.</p>
Resources	<a href="mailto:margaret.berger@mercer.com">margaret.berger@mercer.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:matthew.calloway@mercer.com">matthew.calloway@mercer.com</a> and <a href="mailto:brian.kearney@mercer.com">brian.kearney@mercer.com</a> <a href="#">User’s guide to SECURE 2.0</a> (periodically updated)

US	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues</b></p> <p>Since 1998, employees have been able to pay for qualified transportation fringe benefits through pretax salary reductions under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 132(f), and these benefits have become quite popular. (Employers could provide this benefit on a tax-advantaged basis as early as 1992.) The tax exemption extends to commuting expenses for transit passes, qualified parking, van pools, and in certain years, bicycles.</p> <p>While these benefits are not subject to cafeteria plan or ERISA rules, compliance difficulties exist, and a 2018 tax law that will expire at the end of 2025 added complexities. The federal monthly limits are adjusted every year, most recently for 2024. Some state and local jurisdictions have imposed employer mandates — including one that applies to Chicago-area employers starting in 2024 — leveraging the tax advantage of commuter benefits; other jurisdictions provide tax-related incentives.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com">rich.glass@mercer.com</a> and <a href="mailto:cheryl.hughes@mercer.com">cheryl.hughes@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">GRIST</a>, regularly updated</p>
US	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions</b></p> <p>Noncompete agreements prevent former employees from working for a competing employer or starting a competing business for a certain time period after their employment ends. At the federal level, President Biden, the FTC, the NLRB and Congress have recently attempted to ban or limit the use of noncompete agreements. At the state level, four states — California, Minnesota, North Dakota and Oklahoma — have generally banned noncompete agreements, and New York is poised to do so if the governor signs approved legislation. Numerous other states have enacted restrictions, such as only allowing noncompete agreements for employees above a certain salary threshold. This roundup focuses on recent federal and state actions to restrict noncompete provisions and provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated



US	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer DEI resources after SCOTUS’ ruling on affirmative action</b></p> <p>On June 29, 2023, the US Supreme Court, in <i>Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College</i>, ruled colleges' use of race as a factor in student admissions is unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause.</p> <p>Since the decision, there have been various viewpoints on the effect of this ruling on companies’ DEI programs. For example, the EEOC announced that the decision “does not address employer efforts to foster diverse and inclusive workforces or to engage the talents of all qualified workers, regardless of their background.” The EEOC said “[i]t remains lawful for employers to implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs that seek to ensure workers of all backgrounds are afforded equal opportunity in the workplace.” In July, state attorneys general wrote to Fortune 100 CEOs about the decision and took different positions based on political affiliation.</p> <p>To provide employers with some information about the decision and the varying aspects and issues to consider with respect to employers’ DEI programs, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. The content also does not necessarily reflect Mercer’s or the authors’ point of view on the subject.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated
US — States	
Status	 <b>Effective dates vary.</b>
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives</b></p> <p>This article summarizes state and local retirement initiatives for private-sector workers and rounds up relevant Mercer and third-party resources. This listing is updated periodically and may not always reflect the latest development in every locality.</p>
Resources	<a href="mailto:margaret.berger@mercer.com">margaret.berger@mercer.com</a> and <a href="mailto:brian.kearney@mercer.com">brian.kearney@mercer.com</a> <a href="#">GRIST</a> , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws</b></p> <p>The federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 requires that men and women in the same workplace receive equal pay for equal work. In recent years, many states have taken further efforts to address equal pay, such as enacting laws that prohibit employers from asking job applicants about salary history, requiring disclosure of salary ranges and pay data, protecting employees who disclose their pay, expanding equal pay protections for characteristics other than sex, and broadening comparisons of work and pay. In 2023, New Jersey and Illinois expanded equal pay protections to temporary workers. Stronger federal legislation — the Paycheck Fairness Act — was first introduced in 1997 but has failed to pass after numerous attempts — most recently in June 2021. On March 15, 2022, the Biden administration also announced commitments to advance pay equity.</p> <p>This roundup primarily focuses on recent state legislative initiatives pertaining to salary history bans and salary range disclosure requirements that affect private sector employers, and provides links to state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles. Certain cities have also acted, but they are generally beyond the scope of this roundup.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated
US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws</b></p> <p>Twenty-four states, plus Guam and Washington, DC, have legalized the possession and personal use of marijuana for recreational purposes. To provide employers with some information on states' actions and the varying employment considerations involved, this roundup provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints on marijuana usage for recreational purposes. Thirty-eight states, Guam, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Washington, DC, have legalized marijuana use for medical purposes, but this roundup focuses on legal recreational marijuana use and its implications for employers. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. It also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer resources on minimum wage increases</b></p> <p>On Jan. 1, 2024, the minimum wage rate for federal contracts increased to \$17.20/hour — up from \$16.20/hour in 2023. This minimum wage rate applies to nontipped and tipped employees alike, as this executive order eliminated the lower cash wage that contractors may pay tipped employees. Several states have also acted to gradually increase the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for most employees. To help employers prepare and address related issues, this roundup provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated
US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Roundup: Employer resources on hairstyle nondiscrimination laws</b></p> <p>The Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act movement in the United States aims to prohibit discrimination based on natural hair texture or hairstyles normally associated with race, such as braids, locks, twists, curls, cornrows, Afros, head wraps or bantu knots. The official campaign of the CROWN Act is led by the CROWN Coalition. Federal legislation, supported by the Biden administration, passed the House during the last session of Congress — but was not enacted. Many states have already passed CROWN Acts, and many others are considering legislation. To help employers ensure their employee handbooks and appearance policies are nondiscriminatory and comply with federal, state, and local laws, the roundup cited below provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> , regularly updated

US	
Status	 <b>Proposal</b>
Development	<b>Career</b> <b>Roundup: Employer resources on DOL’s proposed expansion of overtime protections</b> <p>On Aug. 30, 2023, the DOL announced a proposed rule that would significantly expand overtime protections — guaranteeing overtime pay for most salaried workers earning less than \$1,059 per week, or about \$55,000 per year (up from \$35,568 per year). The comment period closed on Nov. 7, 2023. The rule is controversial and will likely undergo revisions prior to being finalized. An Obama-era overtime rule was blocked in 2017 by a federal trial court, and business groups will also likely challenge this rule if finalized. To provide employers with some information about the proposed rules and the varying aspects and issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government websites, third-party resources, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Roundup</a> (Mercer, regularly updated)
US — Alabama (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Health</b> <b>In-vitro fertilization law changed</b> <p>On February 16, 2024, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that embryos created through in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and stored in a medical facility are considered children under the state’s Wrongful Death of a Minor Act that allows parents, and in some cases a personal representative of the minor, to bring a civil action for punitive damages for the death of a child. On March 6, 2024, a remedial bill (SB 159) granting civil and criminal immunity to IVF patients and providers, and criminal immunity with limited civil liability to manufacturers of goods used to facilitate IVF or the transport of stored embryos was signed into law. The immunity provided is retroactive but excludes any pending litigation.</p> <p>Individuals receiving services related to IVF have civil and criminal immunity for “the damage to or the death of an embryo.” Providers of IVF services have the same civil and criminal immunity as patients. Manufacturers of goods used to facilitate the IVF process or the transport of stored embryos have criminal immunity, and civil liability for “the damage to or the death of an embryo” is limited to compensatory damages. IVF clinics do not have immunity.</p> <p>Sponsors of the legislation characterize it as a stop-gap measure to allow fertility treatments to resume while lawmakers address unanswered questions raised by the court’s ruling (e.g., legal personhood in reproductive healthcare, disposition of abandoned frozen embryos, etc.). It remains to be seen, however, if lawmakers will take up these unanswered questions.</p>
Resources	<a href="mailto:katharine.marshall@mercer.com">katharine.marshall@mercer.com</a> <a href="#">SB 159</a> (Legislature)

**US — California (previously covered, updated)**

**Status**  **Currently effective**

**Development**

**Career**

**Certain fast food workers to earn \$20/hour minimum wage**

From April 1, 2024 fast food workers earn \$20/hour under legislation (AB 1228) signed by the governor on Sept. 28, 2023. The Fast Food Council can increase the wage annually, but the increase will be capped at the lesser of 3.5% or the annual increase in the US-CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. The Council is also authorized to develop and propose other labor, health or safety standards for rule-making by the appropriate body. The Council and its authority sunset on Jan. 1, 2029. California's general minimum wage is \$16.50/hour for 2024.

In March 2024, the governor signed legislation (AB 610) that exempts restaurants in airports, hotels, large event centers, theme parks, museums, gambling establishments and certain other locations from the minimum wage law that becomes effective on April 1, 2024. Restaurants in grocery stores and bakeries were already exempt under the law.

**Resources** [AB 1228](#) and [AB 610](#) (Legislature, March 25, 2024)

**US — Illinois (previously covered, updated)**

**Status**  **Currently effective**

**Development**

**Career — Health**

**Temporary workers entitled to equal pay, but ERISA preempts equal benefits**

In March 2024, a US District Court Judge in March 2024 concluded that the equivalent benefits requirements in the Illinois Day and Temporary Labor Services Act are preempted by ERISA, granting a preliminary injunction that stops portions of the law from taking effect on April 1.

Section 42 of the law was at issue. This provision requires temporary service agencies to pay eligible temporary employees at least the same wages as well as equivalent benefits when compared with the lowest paid, directly-hired employee at the same work location. Alternatively, agencies can pay these employees an hourly cash equivalent of the actual benefits cost. Specifically, the plaintiffs successfully argued that the equivalent benefits mandate improperly related to their ERISA plans because it has an impermissible "connection with or reference to" those plans. The equal wages portion of Section 42 was not challenged and took effect on April 1, 2024. Objections to other parts of the law were denied.

**Resources** [rich.glass@mercercor.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercercor.com)  
[Decision](#) (USDC, Northern District of Illinois, March 11, 2024) and [Roundup: US employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws](#) (Mercer, regularly updated)

## US — Indiana (new)

### Status



**Effective July 1, 2024**

### Development

#### Health

##### **Prescription rebate law enacted**

Indiana passed HB 1332, which imposes prescription drug (Rx) rebate requirements on fully insured plans. The new law changes the state's insurance code, which previously allowed fully insured plans the option to reduce defined cost sharing at the point of sale (POS) by the amount of rebates received by the insurer. Now, under HB 1332, insured plans are restricted to two options:

- 100% of rebates applied to reduce premiums for all participants equally
- 85% of rebates applied to reduce participant cost sharing at the point of sale.

The law will take effect July 1. Indiana generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.

### Resources

[rich.glass@mercer.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com)

[HB 1332](#) (Legislature, March 13, 2023)

## US — Mississippi (new)

### Status



**Standard electronic process must be in place by Jan. 1, 2025**

### Development

#### Health

##### **Insurance law restricting prior authorization enacted**

SB 2140 — known as the Mississippi Prior Authorization Reform Act — requires insurers to make prior authorization requirements and restrictions readily accessible, posting them on a website. Related statistics must also be publicly available. Insurers must have a standard electronic process in place by Jan. 1, 2025. Approvals would be valid for the lesser of six months or the length of treatment. An insurer's failure to comply with deadlines and other requirements will result in automatic authorization.

### Resources

[rich.glass@mercer.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com)

[SB 2140](#) (Legislature, Feb. 29, 2024)

US — New York (updated)	
Status	 Comment period is open until May 27, 2024.
Development	<div>Health</div> <div>Pharmacy benefit manager regulations repropose</div> <div>New York's Department of Financial Services (DFS) has repropose regulations that affect pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). The DFS rules, if finalized in current form, would set contract standards between PBMs and pharmacies, impose various consumer protections and restrict PBMs' ability to audit pharmacies.</div>
Resources	<div><a href="mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com">rich.glass@mercer.com</a></div> <div><a href="#">Regulations</a> (Department of Financial Services, March 2024) and <a href="#">Regulatory activity — Insurance law</a> (Department of Financial Services)</div>

**US — Oregon (new)**

**Status**



**Generally takes effect on July 1, 2024**

**Development**

**Career — Health**

**Paid family medical leave program aligned with state family leave law**

Oregon enacted SB 1515, which reduces overlapping provisions in the state’s paid family and medical leave (PFML) program — known as Paid Leave Oregon (PLO) — and the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA). The new law essentially eliminates employees’ ability to stack PLO and OFLA leaves by taking those leaves consecutively. As background, OFLA provides 12 weeks of unpaid leave (plus another 12 weeks for pregnancy-related disability) for reasons similar to federal FMLA, as well as bereavement (up to two weeks per death) and sick child leave. PLO benefits started on Sept. 3, 2023, and are available for up to 12 weeks per year and an additional two weeks for pregnancy- or childbirth-related disability. Qualifying reasons under the two laws are largely the same, with some exceptions. Employers subject to federal FMLA may still have FMLA leave run concurrently with either PLO or OFLA leave if the reason qualifies under both laws.

Highlights include:

- Effective July 1, SB 1515 reduces the duplication between the two laws by removing most of the OFLA qualifying reasons (including the employee’s or family member’s serious health condition and child bonding) that are available with PLO. OFLA will still provide protected leave where PLO does not, particularly to care for a sick child, home care due to a school closure or a public health emergency and bereavement, the latter of which will now be limited to four weeks per year. One exception is pregnancy-related disability leave, which will continue to be covered by both laws.
- From now until Jan. 1, 2025, employees will have up to two weeks under OFLA to effectuate the legal process for foster care placement or adoption. Thereafter, leave for this reason will be available solely under PLO, up to the standard 12 weeks per year.
- SB 1515 allows employees to use any employer-provided, accrued sick leave, vacation or other paid time off to top off the PFML benefit, up to their full wages. However, no current mechanism exists for employers to look up the PFML benefit amount in order to calculate the top-off amount. As a result, employers may — but are not required to — allow a top-off amount that results in benefits exceeding full wages. Unless prohibited by a collective bargaining agreement, employers may dictate the order that employees use employer-provided paid leave for top-off purposes; for example, they could require use of vacation before sick time.
- OFLA and PLO currently measure a “one-year period” differently. OFLA aligns with federal FMLA, allowing employer discretion. PLO defines it as 52 consecutive weeks beginning on the Sunday immediately before leave commences. Effective July 1, OFLA will adopt the PLO definition.
- Under the state’s predictive scheduling law, employers must provide at least 14 days’ notice to change their schedule, or else pay additional compensation. SB 1515 creates an exception to this rule, if an employer has less than 14 days’ notice that an employee on leave will return to work, the employer may change the schedule of the employee temporarily assigned to cover for the employee on leave without paying the additional compensation.

**Resources**

[rich.glass@mercer.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com)  
[SB 1515](#) (Legislature, March 20, 2024)



**US — Oregon (new)**

**Status**



**Effective for plan or policy years starting on or after Jan. 1, 2025.**

**Development**

**Health**

**Prescription drug law enacted**

An Oregon law requires insured plans and all multiple employer welfare arrangements (MEWAs) to apply third-party financial assistance to cost sharing in defined circumstances.

As a result of 2024 Ch. 35 (HB 4113), MEWAs (both self-funded and fully insured) and fully insured plans will have to include amounts paid from any third party when calculating a participant's contribution to the deductible, out-of-pocket maximum and other cost sharing, subject to these conditions:

- There is no generic equivalent.
- There is a generic equivalent, but the participant has obtained prior authorization, completed step therapy or otherwise received plan approval.
- The mandate does not apply to an HSA-qualified high-deductible health plan until the participant meets the minimum statutory HDHP deductible under § 223(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The law will take effect for plan or policy years starting on or after Jan. 1, 2025. Oregon generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.

**Resources**

[rich.glass@mercer.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com)

[2024 Ch. 35](#) (HB 4113, March 27, 2023) (Legislature)

**US — Pennsylvania (new)****Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Health****Taxation change of dependent care benefits confirmed**

The state Department of Revenue (DOR) recently confirmed that, as a result of 2023 Act 34 (HB 1300), dependent care flexible spending account (FSA) contributions are no longer taxable under state law. Because the law was enacted on Dec. 14, 2023 and was effective retroactive to Jan. 1, 2023, many payroll systems may have been unable to make conforming changes before issuing Form W-2 to affected employees.

As a result, these are the steps to take:

- Employers. If W-2s have already been filed with DOR, file corrected W-2s with DOR and provide a corrected W-2 to affected employees. If W-2s have not been filed yet, file updated W-2s (i.e., box 16 state wages should not include amounts in box 10. Do not file amended W-3s and Annual Withholding Reconciliation Statements (REV-1667s). Confirm that dependent care FSA contributions are nontaxable on a go-forward basis.
- Employees. In separate guidance, DOR confirmed that if employees do not have a corrected W-2, they should ask the employer for one. Failing that, employees may file their state tax return by decreasing box 16 state wages by the amount in box 10, using the revised amount for line 1a. They should also include a written statement from the employer, verifying why the amounts do not match.

HB 1300 did not affect the state tax treatment of 401(k) contributions, which remain taxable.

**Resources**

[rich.glass@mercer.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com)

[Act 34 of 2023 – Dependent care plan \(section 129\) – Employer info](#) (Department of Revenue, March 6, 2024) and [Act 34 of 2023 – Dependent care plan \(section 129\) – Employee info](#) (Department of Revenue, March 7, 2024)


**US — Washington (new)****Status**  **Effective on or about June 6, 2024.****Development****Career — Health****Law defines disclosure requirements for healthcare providers under paid family or medical leave law**


HB 2102 defines requirements for healthcare provider disclosures under the state's current paid family or medical leave (PFML) law. Healthcare providers must provide PFML certifications and documentation within seven calendar days after a request at no charge to the patient. However, providers can charge a fee for an office visit needed to evaluate the patient.

**Resources**

[rich.glass@mercer.com](mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com)

[HB 2102](#) (Legislature)

US — Washington (new)	
Status	 Effective on or about June 6, 2024.
Development	<div><div>Health</div><div><b>Telehealth laws enacted</b></div><div>Two laws relating to the provider-patient telehealth relationship and out-of-state telehealth providers were enacted. SB 5821 expands the time frame for establishing a relationship for audio-only telehealth services. Previously, the law required either an in-person appointment or a real-time interactive appointment with the provider within the past two years. Alternatively, a referral by a provider who met the two-year standard was also permissible. Mental health and substance use disorder treatments had a three-year time frame. Now, under SB 5821, the standard is three years for all healthcare services. The law applies to fully insured plans, state/local governmental plans and state Medicaid. Washington applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered by fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.</div><div>SB 5481 (known as the Uniform Telehealth Act) enables licensed out-of-state healthcare practitioners to provide telehealth services to patients in the state as long as they are in good standing where they are licensed. A provider-patient relationship can be established via telehealth, but not via email or instant/text messaging. Services must be within the scope of practice and must comply with applicable Washington standards.</div></div>
Resources	<div><a href="mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com">rich.glass@mercer.com</a></div> <div><a href="#">SB 5821</a> (Legislature, March 19, 2024) and <a href="#">SB 54.81</a> (Legislature, March 19, 2024)</div>

US — Washington (new)	
Status	 Effective on Jan. 1, 2026.
Development	<div><div>Health</div><div><b>Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted</b><p>Washington enacted SB 5213, a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) law amended by the House to allow (instead of require) self-funded ERISA plans to participate in the law's major provisions. Here is a summary:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires PBMs to apply the same fees and conditions to mail-order pharmacies that apply to other in-network pharmacies</li><li>• Prohibits PBMs from imposing additional credentialing or other requirements for participation in any network (including specialty)</li><li>• Bars PBMs from reimbursing network pharmacies less than the PBM's contract price with an insurer, third-party payor or other purchaser.</li></ul><p>Of course, a self-funded ERISA plan wanting to have the law's provisions apply could (as an alternative) simply work to negotiate similar terms in its PBM services contract.</p><p>The law will take effect on Jan. 1, 2026.</p></div></div>
Resources	<div><div><a href="mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com">rich.glass@mercer.com</a></div><div><a href="#">SB 5213</a> (Legislature, March 25, 2024)</div></div>

US — Wyoming	
Status	Most provisions will be effective on July 1, 2026.
Development	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><b>Prior authorization insurance law enacted</b></p> <p>Wyoming passed 2023 Ch. 19 (HB 14), which applies certain restrictions to prior authorization provisions in fully insured plans. The law affects insurers and contracted utilization review entities, an undefined term in the law. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced disclosure requirements</li><li>• Deadlines of 72 hours for urgent claims and five days for nonurgent claims (the federal ERISA standard is 72 hours and 15 days)</li><li>• Prohibition on prior authorization for medications for opioid use disorder</li><li>• “Gold carding” mandate, where providers have a prior authorization exemption if 90% of their authorizations were approved in the prior 12-month period</li><li>• Outpatient and prescription drug authorizations valid for at least one year.</li></ul> <p>HB 14 directs the state’s Department of Insurance to initiate rulemaking and further define terms. All provisions will take effect on July 1, except for gold carding, which will take effect on Jan. 1, 2026. Extraterritorial application of Wyoming insurance laws is unclear.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:rich.glass@mercer.com">rich.glass@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">2023 Ch. 19 (HB 14)</a> (Legislature, March 4, 2024)</p>

## US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

### Development

#### Career

- [Obligations imposed on employers who use freelancers in New York](#) — key date: May 20, 2024
- [Minimum hourly wage for healthcare workers will gradually increase to \\$25/hour in California](#) — key date: June 2024
- [Law bans age-related inquiries during hiring process in Colorado](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Two-tier minimum wage system to be eliminated in Nevada](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Employers will need to provide notice of workers' bill of rights in New York City](#) — July 1, 2024
- [Law requiring pay transparency in job postings enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Hourly minimum wage to increase to \\$18 in Hawaii](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

#### Career — Health

- [New unpaid child bereavement leave law enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: June 1, 2024
- [Employers need to develop workplace violence prevention plans in California](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Effective date of paid sick and safe leave law delayed in Chicago, Illinois](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Paid family medical leave contribution rate announced in Maryland](#) — key date: October 2024
- [Paid family and medical leave mandated in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Pay range disclosure required in job ads, salary history inquiries banned in Washington, DC](#) — key date: June 30, 2024

## US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates) (continued)

### Development

#### Health

- [Health insurance restrictions enacted in Connecticut](#) — July 1, 2024
- [Sweeping pharmacy benefit manager law passed in Florida](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Telehealth law enacted in South Dakota](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Telehealth law extended in Washington](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Prescription drug law enacted in Virginia](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Fertility coverage mandate expanded in New Jersey](#) — key date: Aug. 1, 2024
- [Telehealth parity requirement extended in New Jersey](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2024
- [High-deductible health plan COVID-19 testing preeductible flexibility ends](#) — key date: Jan 1, 2025
- [Maternal and infant health equity program required in California](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Paid family medical leave program legislation enacted in Delaware](#) — key date: 2025
- [Law requires a unified healthcare financing system study in California](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [New law to require dental plan disclosures in California](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Third-party prescription drug payment law enacted in Colorado](#) — key date: 2025 plan year
- [Health coverage mandates enacted in Colorado](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Telehealth law effective for existing plans in Louisiana](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Medically necessary fertility preservation law effective in Louisiana](#) — earlier of renewal or Jan. 1, 2025
- [Prescription cost-sharing limits law enacted in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Ancillary plan exception finalized in New Mexico](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Prescription benefit law enacted in North Dakota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Cost-sharing caps imposed on specialty drugs and EpiPens in Rhode Island](#) — key date: 2025 plan year
- [Prescription drug requirements enacted in Texas](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Benefit law enacted in Washington](#) — key date: Jan 1, 2025
- [Fertility treatment law enacted in Washington, DC](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2025
- [Insulin cost-sharing law enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Data protection law enacted in Tennessee](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Law applies balance billing restrictions to ground ambulance providers in Texas](#) — key date: Expires Sept. 1, 2025
- [Telehealth law to expire in Hawaii](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2025
- [Paid family and medical leave law enacted in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [State-based exchange delivery to change in Oregon](#) — key date: Nov. 1, 2026


### Development

#### Wealth


- [Final regulations on minimum present values issued](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2024
- [Eagerly awaited defined benefit mortality tables issued](#) — key date: 2025
- [IRS delays SECURE 2.0's Roth catch-up mandate](#) — key date: 2026



# Section 4

## Asia Pacific

Australia (new)	
Status	 Contributions to begin July 1, 2025
Development	<p><b>Career — Health — Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Government to pay superannuation on paid parental leave payments</b></p> <p>The government announced it will make superannuation contributions on government-paid parental leave payments from July 1, 2025, to enhance gender equality in the workforce and normalize time-off for caring responsibilities. Further details on the measure, including costs, will be released in the budget on May 14, 2024.</p> <p>Separately, the Western Australian (WA) State Government announced on March 8, 2024, the expansion of payment of superannuation on unpaid parental leave to 24 weeks for all WA public sector employees.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:emily.shao@mercer.com">emily.shao@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Paying super on government paid parental leave to enhance economic security and gender equality</a> (Government, March 7, 2024)</p>



Australia (new)	
Status	 Applies to insurance and superannuation entities from July 1, 2025; consultation is open until April 19, 2024.
Development	<p><b>Career — Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Financial Accountability Regime, rules and information package published</b></p> <p>The government registered the final Minister Rules to support commencement of the Financial Accountability Regime (FAR) for the banking industry from March 15, 2024. The rules have replaced the Banking Executive Accountability Regime, and will apply to insurance and superannuation entities from July 1, 2025. The FAR aims to improve the risk and governance cultures in those financial institutions.</p> <p>The Financial Accountability Regime (Minister) Rules 2024 prescribe a range of matters in support of the FAR, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The responsibilities and positions covering specified business activities and functions in each industry</li><li>• The threshold (based on total asset size) triggering an entity’s requirement to provide additional accountability statements and maps (\$30 billion in combined assets for super trustees).</li></ul> <p>The FAR is jointly administered by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). The regulators have released Regulator Rules and other material to support the banking industry’s transition to the FAR.</p> <p>On March 14, 2024, APRA and ASIC wrote to insurance and superannuation entities outlining the actions they should take prior to FAR commencement, and provided an information and consultation package to help entities and their accountable persons understand and comply with their FAR obligations; an updated accountability statement guide and template; and a consultation package for insurance and superannuation entities seeking feedback on proposed amendments to the Regulator Rules and draft key functions descriptions. Input is invited by April 19, 2024.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:paul.shallue@mercer.com">paul.shallue@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Financial Accountability Regime (Minister) rules 2024</a> (Federal Register of Legislation, March 6, 2024) and <a href="#">The Financial Accountability Regime – Preparing for commencement and consultation on the draft regulator rules amendment instrument</a></p>

Australia (new)	
Status	 <b>Effective Aug. 26, 2024</b>
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Employees will have the right to disconnect after working hours</b></p> <p>Employees will have the right to reasonably refuse contact with their employer and others outside working hours under measures included in the Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes No. 2) Act 2023 that generally takes effect on Aug. 26, 2024 — six months after it received Royal Assent on Feb. 26, 2024. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees will be allowed to “refuse to monitor, read or respond to contact, or attempted contact” from their employer (or related parties) outside their working hours without being penalized, unless the refusal is unreasonable.</li> <li>• A nonexhaustive list of factors should be considered to determine if a refusal is unreasonable. They include the reason for the contact; how the contact is made and the amount of disruption to the employee; the employee’s job role and responsibility; the employee’s personal circumstances; compensation (either monetary or other) to the employee for their availability to work outside their working hours; and if the contact is required by law.</li> <li>• The Fair Work Commission (FWC) will consider disputes about “reasonable contact” that cannot first be resolved in the workplace. The FWC could issue an order for the employer to stop unreasonable out-of-hours contact and impose penalties of up to AU\$18,000.</li> <li>• The right to disconnect will be included as a model term in modern awards and will be explicitly recognized as a protected right under the Fair Work Act 2009. Enterprise agreements likely will incorporate the measure.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes No. 2) Act 2023</a> (Legislature)
Australia (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Fringe benefit tax guidance updated</b></p> <p>Updated fringe benefit taxation (FBT) guidance was issued by the Australian Taxation Office on March 19, 2024. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation that the tax rate is unchanged at 47% for tax years 2022 through 2025</li> <li>• The criteria for the exempt private use of eligible electric vehicles</li> <li>• The calculation of FBT for motor vehicles</li> <li>• Separate gross-up rates for benefit providers that are eligible and ineligible to claim goods and services tax credits.</li> <li>• Summary of upcoming legislative changes to FBT.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Fringe benefit tax return 2024 instructions</a> (Australian Taxation Office, March 19, 2024)

## Australia (new)

### Status



Consultation open through April 19, 2024.

### Development

#### Wealth

##### Superannuation Performance Test review, consultation issued

The government has released its much-anticipated consultation paper on options to refine the design of the annual Performance Test that currently applies to MySuper and Trustee-Directed Products (TDPs). The consultation was triggered by concerns that the current test holds back investment in certain sectors that could provide strong returns for members (such as the energy transition and affordable housing), and the lack of suitable benchmarks for some sectors. Comments are invited through April 19, 2024.

The Performance Test was introduced for MySuper products in 2021 and extended to TDPs in 2023. The Performance Test is conducted by the Australia Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) in July-August each year, and assesses the performance of a superannuation product. Trustees of products that fail the test must notify affected members, and products that fail two years in a row are closed to new members until they pass a future test.



Highlights of the consultation include:


- Four broad options are offered: retention of the status quo; alternative single-metric that would allow for better performance assessment; multi-metric framework that would provide an expanded performance assessment; and alternative framework that would allow stakeholders the opportunity to put forward a different option.
- Key principles that could be used to assess potential changes to the testing framework.
- Broader reform considerations, including potential extension of the test to other products.


### Resources

[paul.shallue@mercer.com](mailto:paul.shallue@mercer.com)

[Improving the superannuation performance test](#) (Treasury, March 8, 2024) and [Annual Superannuation Performance Test — design options](#) (Treasury, March 8, 2024)

Australia (new)	
Status	 Consultation open through April 26, 2024.
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Draft regulations on tax treatment of DB balances over \$3 million proposed</b></p> <p>The government has released for consultation the Exposure Draft Regulations (draft regulations) outlining the proposed “commensurate treatment” of DB interests for the Better Targeted Superannuation Concessions tax measure (Division 296 tax). Comments are invited through April 26, 2024.</p> <p>Division 296 tax is proposed to apply from July 1, 2025, at a rate of 15% on the earnings for the portion of an individual's total super balance exceeding AU\$3 million. The bills to introduce the Division 296 tax remain before Parliament.</p> <p>According to the draft Explanatory Statement, the draft regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify the Division 296 earnings formula to appropriately capture DB notional contributions (rather than actual contributions) and relevant family law split transactions</li> <li>• Set out methods to determine the amount of DB balances for the purpose of determining an individual's Total Superannuation Balance (TSB) and adjust TSB values for DB interests subject to a family law payment split.</li> <li>• Update the actuarial assumptions used to calculate DB notional contributions.</li> </ul>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:paul.shallue@mercero.com">paul.shallue@mercero.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exposure Draft Regulations</a> (The Treasury, March 15, 2024)</p>
Australia (new)	
Status	 Consultation open through April 26, 2024.
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Family law superannuation regulations proposed</b></p> <p>The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) released a consultation on the Family Law (Superannuation) Regulations 2024 that would replace regulations sunsetting on April 1, 2025. Comments are invited through April 26, 2024.</p> <p>The consultation material also includes a consultation paper and a comparison table mapping the new draft provisions to the existing provisions.</p> <p>According to the AGD, the superannuation splitting framework under the proposed regulations is substantially the same as the current framework. However, as the current regulations were made in 2001, changes are required to modernize the language and ensure their effective operation. The proposed regulations would also clarify several provisions and ensure that superannuation splitting arrangements keep pace with developments in superannuation products (such as innovative retirement income stream products) and with broader superannuation policy.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:paul.shallue@mercero.com">paul.shallue@mercero.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exposure draft: Family law (superannuation) regulations 2024</a> (AGD, April 26, 2024)</p>

Australia (new)	
Status	 Consultation open through May 13, 2024.
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Proposed changes to operational risk financial requirement</b></p> <p>The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) released for consultation proposed amendments to Prudential Standard SPS 114 Operational Risk Financial Requirement (SPS 114) and its associated guidance, Prudential Practice Guide SPG 114 Operational Risk Financial Requirement (SPG 114). The consultation follows APRA's November 2022 discussion paper on potential changes to operational risk financial requirements. Comments are invited through May 13, 2024.</p> <p>The proposed changes aim to improve the possibility for Registrable Superannuation Entity (RSE) licensees to use the Operational Risk Financial Requirement (ORFR) to manage the impact of disruption, and smooth operational risk-related losses across different cohorts of beneficiaries.</p> <p>APRA considers that the existing guideline target of 25 basis points for the ORFR of funds under management should be maintained. However, the SPG 114 proposals recognize that, in exceptional cases, an RSE licensee could adopt a lower target amount.</p> <p>APRA plans to finalize the SPS 114 updates later in 2024, and they would commence in 2025, to align with (or follow) CPS 230.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:paul.shallue@mercer.com">paul.shallue@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Consultation on financial resources for risk events in superannuation: Operational risk financial requirement</a> (APRA, Feb. 19, 2024)</p>

Australia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Employer gender pay, equality reporting requirements expanded</b></p> <p>From April 1, 2024, the gender pay information that certain employers submit annually to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) will be made public, and employers’ reporting obligations will expand. The Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023 implements several of the recommendations included in the WGEA’s report.</p> <p>Employers with 100 or more employees must provide gender pay information to the WGEA using six equality indicators: gender composition of (i) the employer’s governing bodies and (ii) at all levels of their workforce; (iii) equal remuneration between men and women; (iv) employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees; (v) working arrangements that support employees’ family and caring responsibilities; and (vi) consultation with employees on issues concerning workplace gender equality and sexual harassment and discrimination. Highlights of the Act include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employers must provide additional workforce data, including employees’ ages and primary workplace locations and the remuneration of chief executive officers and casual managers.</li><li>• Employers’ reports will have to include sexual harassment, harassment on grounds of sex or discrimination.</li><li>• Employers with 500 or more employees will need to have a policy or strategy that covers all six gender equality indicators. So far, employer policies or strategies have had to address only one or more of the indicators.</li></ul>
Resources	<p><a href="#">WGEA reforms: A roadmap to closing the gender pay gap (WGEA) and Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023</a> (Federal Register, April 12, 2023)</p>

## Australia (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

### Development

#### Career — Wealth

- [Financial Accountability Regime begins for super trustees and insurers](#) — key date: March 15, 2025

#### Wealth

- [Some provisions to strengthen work incentives for pensioners now effective](#) — key date: July 1, 2024
- [Guidance on claiming reduced input tax credits issued](#) —key date: July 1, 2024
- [New operational risk management standard to apply](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Extension of superannuation disclosure relief confirmed](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

## China (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

### Development

#### Career

- [Preferential taxation policy for expatriates expanded](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2027
- [Preferential taxation policy for annual one-time bonus extended](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2027

## Hong Kong (new)

### Status



Effective dates vary.

### Development

#### Career

#### Number of statutory holidays increased

Hong Kong announced a phased increase in the number of statutory holidays — to 17 by 2030 — under changes included in the Employment Amendment Ordinance, 2021. Starting in 2024, the number of statutory holidays is 14 days, with the addition of a holiday on Dec. 26, 2024. Further statutory holidays will be introduced on Easter Monday in 2026; Good Friday in 2028; and the day after Good Friday in 2030.

### Resources

[Statutory Holidays for 2024](#) (Labour Department)

## Hong Kong (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)


### Development

#### Career


- [Gender board diversity, corporate governance required](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2024

#### Wealth

- [Mandatory pension fund offsetting to end](#) — key date: May 2025

India (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>National standards for workplace crèche/day care facilities issued</b></p> <p>On Feb. 1, 2024, the Ministry of Women and Child Development issued the National Minimum Standards and Protocol for Crèches (Operation and Management) (NMSPC) to improve workplace (day care) crèche standards. Only three states (Karnatak, Haryana and Maharashtra) had published guidelines on the facilities that crèches should provide. The NMSPC provide guidance to employers providing crèches, including management and governance of the crèche; minimum staffing and qualification requirements; and security measures (such as closed circuit television).</p> <p>The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 required establishments with 50 or more employees to provide a crèche facility within the prescribed distance, either at the workplace or shared with other employers. The act did not include any details on crèche facilities, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment had instructed state governments to issue rules.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="#">National Minimum Standards and Protocol for Crèches (Operation and Management)</a> (Ministry of Women &amp; Child Development) and <a href="#">Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017</a></p>
India (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Career — Health — Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Labor and employment laws reformed</a> — key date: effective date delayed</li></ul>



Japan (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Discretionary work system rules adjusted</b></p> <p>From April 1, 2024, Japan’s Labor Standards Act (LSA) will include changes to the professional “discretionary work system” (DWS) that allow employers to introduce special working time systems for certain types of roles and exempt them from paying overtime.</p> <p>The DWS can be used for “specialized” (qualified professionals) who have significant discretion in how they perform their work, and for “planning” (corporate management) duties.</p> <p>The LSA defines the type of roles DWS “specialized” duties apply to. A labor-management agreement must cover certain employment matters, and the agreements must be submitted to the labor standards inspectorate.</p> <p>The DWS for “planning” duties applies to white-collar employees whose roles cover strategic planning and corporate management. For this type of DWS, a labor-management committee must pass resolutions on certain matters that then have to be submitted to the labor standards inspectorate.</p> <p>Highlights of the changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Specialized” duties. Merger and acquisition advisory duties will be added to the duties within this type of DWS — currently, it includes 19 specific roles. All employees will have to consent individually to apply the DWS, and labor-management agreements will have to include certain new provisions (such as the procedure for withdrawing consent).</li><li>• “Planning” duties. For this type of DWS, employee consent will be required and the labor-management committee must pass a resolution on the withdrawal of consent. Certain operating rules applicable to the labor-management committee will also change, and employers will have to explain to the committee any changes to the wage and evaluation system.</li><li>• If individual consent is not given, the employer cannot apply for overtime exemptions.</li><li>• For both types of duties, employers will be subject to new record keeping requirements.</li></ul>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:yukiko.sanjo@marsh.com">yukiko.sanjo@marsh.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Information on DWS (Japanese)</a> (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)</p>

Japan (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <b>Overtime cap extended to more industry sectors</b> From April 1, 2024, Japan’s cap on overtime hours applies to additional industry sectors (such as logistics, construction and doctors) that were previously given a grace period due to the specific nature of the work and related business practices. The application of the overtime cap to these previously excluded sectors has been called “the 2024 problem” due to the staffing shortages typically associated with these types of jobs. The overtime measures are included in the Workstyle Reform Act that took effect on April 1, 2019, for large employers, and April 1, 2020, for small and medium-sized employers. The Act set a maximum overtime of 45 hours/month, and 360 hours/year, which could be extended in certain circumstances to 80 hours/month and 720 hours/year.
Resources	<a href="mailto:yukiko.sanjo@marsh.com">yukiko.sanjo@marsh.com</a> <a href="#">Information on workstyle reform act</a> (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

## Japan (previously covered, now effective)

**Status**  **Currently effective**

### Development

#### Career

##### Employers' notification of employment terms to change

Effective April 1, 2024, the notification of employment terms by employers changed under measures included in the Labour Standards Act Ordinance. Highlights include:

- Employers must notify employees when they are hired of future possible changes in their workplace (including office location changes, in-person or remote work) and their duties. Previously, employers had to clearly notify employees about their employment terms and duties at the time of hiring.
- Employers must notify fixed-term employees of the maximum number of contracts they will be given, and of the total duration of their employment. Employers who later want to adjust the number of renewals for fixed-term employment contracts, or the total duration, must explain their reasons.
- Employers must notify fixed-term employees who have five or more years of employment with the same employer of their right to apply for an open-ended contract.
- Employers must explain the factors considered when setting the employment terms for fixed-term employees who later convert to open-ended contracts.

### Resources

[Announcement](#) (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) and [Information on law change](#) (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

## Japan (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

### Development

#### Wealth

- [Defined contribution reforms enacted](#) — key date: Dec. 1, 2024

## Malaysia (previously covered with upcoming effective dates)

### Development

#### Career

- [Progressive wage policy to be implemented](#) — key date: expected in June 2024

## New Zealand (new)

**Status**  **Currently effective**

### Development



#### Career


##### Minimum wage increased on April 1

From April 1, 2024, the adult hourly minimum wage increased to NZ\$23.15, up from NZ\$22.70. The training and starting minimum wage is NZ\$18.52, up from NZ\$18.16.

### Resources

[Ministry wage rising to \\$23.15 per hour from April 1, 2024](#) (Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment, Feb. 1, 2024)

Singapore (new)	
Status	 <b>Effective Jan. 1, 2025</b>
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Employment Pass salary threshold to increase in 2025</b></p> <p>From Jan. 1, 2025, the Employment Pass (EP) qualifying salary for new applications will increase to SG\$5,600 per month, and SG\$6,200 in the financial services sector. The increased salary threshold will also apply to EP renewals from Jan. 1, 2026.</p> <p>The EP qualifying salary thresholds are benchmarked to the top one-third of wages of professional, managers, executives and technicians (PMET). In addition to meeting the minimum salary, from Sept. 1, 2023, EP applicants must pass the points-based Complementarity Assessment Framework (COMPASS). Certain roles are exempt from COMPASS including individuals earning a fixed minimum monthly salary of SG\$22,500, overseas intra-corporate transferees, and individuals who are filling a role for up to one month.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Eligibility for employment pass</a> (Ministry of Manpower)
Singapore (new)	
Status	 <b>Increasing in 2026</b>
Development	<p><b>Career — Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Retirement and reemployment ages to increase</b></p> <p>On March 4, 2024, the government announced that the retirement and reemployment ages will increase to 64 and 69 respectively in 2026, up from age 63 and 68.</p> <p>In 2019, the government announced an incremental increase to the retirement and reemployment ages to 65 and 70 by 2030. One out of every four Singapore citizens will be aged 65 or older by 2030.</p> <p>The current reemployment policy gives eligible employees the opportunity to continue working until they are 68. Employers unable to offer reemployment to eligible employees must transfer their reemployment obligation to another employer (subject to the employee's agreement) or pay a one-off Employment Assistance Payment to the employee.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Speech by minister of state</a> (Ministry of Manpower, March 4, 2024); <a href="#">Responsible reemployment</a> (Ministry of Manpower)
Singapore (previously covered with upcoming effective dates)	
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Legislation to combat discrimination will be issued</a> — key date: second half of 2024</li> </ul> <p><b>Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Central Provident Fund monthly salary cap for calculating contributions increased</a> — December 2024</li> </ul>

South Korea (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Child care leave scheme expanded</b></p> <p>The South Korean government's recent expansion of its child care leave scheme aims to increase the take-up of child care leave by fathers and boost shared parenting. The measures took effect on Jan. 1, 2024. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child care benefit is now paid to parents taking the leave for children up to age 18 months — up from 12 months.</li><li>• Parents who take child care leave at the same time, or sequentially, each receive a government subsidy based on the employee's wage for the first six months of leave — up from three months. The benefit is subject to a minimum and maximum limit, and the payment increases each month to encourage parents to take a longer leave period — for example, the benefit amount paid for the first month of leave, per parent, is 2 million KRW and increases to 4.5 million KRW for the sixth month.</li></ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Child care leave scheme</a> (Korean) (Government)

# Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

## European Union (EU) (new)

### Status



Member states will likely have to transpose the directive into national laws in 2026.

### Development

#### Career

##### Rights of platform workers finalized

On March 8, 2024, the EU finalized a directive to improve the working conditions of platform (“gig”) workers. Platform workers include ride-sharing and delivery groups, digital labor platforms, app-based freelance workers and other types of workers whose work is assigned to them, or whose performance is assessed, using automated decision making. The directive is the first EU law to regulate the use of algorithms in the workplace and will give workers the right to know how automated systems make decisions about them. Member states will likely have to incorporate the terms of the directive into their national laws in 2026 —within two years of the directive taking effect. Highlights include:

- Member states must have appropriate and effective procedures to determine the correct employment status of persons performing platform work. The directive includes a presumption of employment status when there are facts concerning control and direction, and it will be for the employer or platform to prove that the worker is not an employee. Member states must issue guidance to digital platforms and national authorities.
- The directive does not include an EU-wide test for determining circumstances when the employment status applies.
- Digital labor platforms will be subject to increased transparency about their use of algorithms in HR management.
- Workers must be informed about the use of automated monitoring or decision making in their recruitment, working conditions and earnings, among other issues.
- Automated systems must be monitored by qualified staff, and workers will be allowed to challenge automated decisions made about them — these could include access to and organization of work assignments; earnings; the pricing of individual assignments; and restriction, suspension or termination of their account. Furthermore, digital labor platforms will have to evaluate every two years the impact of automated decisions.
- Automated monitoring or decision-making systems will be banned from processing certain types of personal data of workers performing platform work.
- Member states must take measures to address digital labor platforms’ use of intermediaries. Individuals performing platform work, and who have a contractual relationship with an intermediary, must have the same protection as individuals who have a direct contractual relationship with a digital labour platform.

### Resources

[Platform workers: Council confirms agreement on new rules to improve their working conditions](#) (European Council, March 11, 2024)

EU (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Directive on promoting statutory minimum wages finalized</a> — key date: Nov. 15, 2024</li> <li>• <a href="#">Reforms to Blue Card coming for highly skilled workers</a> — key date: Nov. 18, 2024</li> <li>• <a href="#">Law to improve gender balance on company boards approved</a> — key date: June 7, 2026</li> <li>• <a href="#">Pay transparency law must be transposed into national law</a> — key date: June 7, 2026</li> </ul> <p><b>Career — Health — Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">EU requires enhanced corporate sustainability disclosures</a> — key date: July 6, 2024</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainability reporting standards issued</a> — key date: 2025</li> </ul>
Belgium (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Blue- and white-collar pension harmonization postponed</a> — key date: Jan. 1, 2027</li> <li>• <a href="#">Federal government agrees on pension reforms</a> — key date: Jan. 1, 2028</li> </ul>
Channel Islands — Guernsey (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rollout of secondary pension scheme requirements in 2024</a> — key date: July 2024</li> </ul>
Denmark (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Additional employment deduction to be implemented</a> — key date: Jan. 1, 2025</li> </ul>
France (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mandatory profit-sharing measures expanded</a> — key date: July 2024</li> <li>• <a href="#">New gender quotas imposed for senior execs/management teams</a> — key date: March 1, 2026</li> </ul>

## Germany (new)

### Status



Currently effective

### Development

#### Career

##### Immigration rules for skilled foreign workers eased

The second phase of Germany's Skilled Immigration Act took effect on March 1, 2024, following the introduction of the first phase in November 2023. The measures aim to increase the employment of skilled foreign workers from outside the European Union to meet skill shortages in Germany. A "job search opportunity card" will be introduced on June 1, 2024. Highlights of phase two include:



- Skilled workers with at least of two years of vocational training in nonregulated work can now work in Germany, subject to recognition of their degree or similar vocational qualifications by the country that awarded the qualification — the qualifications no longer have to be recognized in Germany. Employees must also have German language skills.
- Employers of foreign skilled workers must be subject to a collective agreement, or the worker's salary must meet a certain minimum threshold.
- For professional qualifications that still require recognition in Germany — for example, certain healthcare sector roles — the process can start once the worker moves to Germany. In such cases, the skilled worker and employer must commit to a "recognition partnership" to speed up the hiring of pre-qualified specialists and allows workers to combine employment with obtaining additional qualifications in Germany.
- Employers can hire foreign skilled contingent workers to meet labor shortages for up to eight months — a cap of 25,000 foreign worker contingent visas will apply in 2024. To be eligible, employers must be subject to a collective agreement and pay social insurance contributions for contingent workers from the start of their employment in Germany.
- The "priority check" applicable to vocational training schemes will be abolished to enable training places to be filled more quickly. For "tolerated persons" (including some refugees), a residence permit can be granted to incentivize such individuals to undertake vocational training.
- Foreign workers can now combine a stay in Germany for educational or language purposes with part-time employment.

### Resources

[david.lesch@mercer.com](mailto:david.lesch@mercer.com)

[Information on Skilled Immigration Act \(German\)](#) (Government, Feb. 29, 2024)



Germany (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><b>Nearly half of health insurance funds increase supplementary contribution rates</b></p> <p>The Federal Ministry of Health announced that 45 of the statutory health insurance funds raised their supplementary contribution rates, effective Jan. 1, 2024. Forty-five funds did not change their supplementary rate, and four reduced it. Each health insurance fund can set its own additional supplementary contribution rate, and the average rate is 1.7% (up from 1.6% in 2023). The general contribution rate is 14.6%.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:david.lesch@mercer.com">david.lesch@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Announcement</a> (German) (Ministry of Health)</p>
Germany (new)	
Status	 <b>Proposal</b>
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Public pension reform bill published</b></p> <p>On March 5, 2024, the government presented a draft bill to parliament that creates a new fund — the Generation Capital Fund — that would invest in the global capital markets. The goal is to modernize its public pension system and stabilize pension insurance contribution rates. Currently, the federal budget pays €110 billion annually into the public pay-as-you-go pension system. The government has published FAQs to explain the fund. Highlights of the bill include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new fund would invest in global capital markets, and would be managed by an independent public foundation. The government would provide an initial €12 billion capital investment and would then contribute 3% annually.</li> <li>• Public pension benefits would be financed by income from the fund's investments; federal loans would be used to finance pension benefits in the short-term (the government estimates this would be until 2030).</li> <li>• The fund would fully reimburse the federal government for the interest costs incurred by the refinancing loans.</li> <li>• The “standard pension” remains at minimum of 48% of the current average wage, and the retirement age (currently 66 and slated to increase to 67 in 2031) would not increase.</li> </ul> <p>Public pension contributions are expected to increase to 21.2 % of gross salaries by 2035 under the existing pension system — currently, they are 18.6% of gross wages with employers and employees each paying 9.3%. The government hopes the fund will stabilize pension contribution amounts.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:david.lesch@mercer.com">david.lesch@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Bill</a> (German) (Government, March 2024) and <a href="#">FAQs</a> (German) (Government, March 5, 2024)</p>

**Germany (previously covered, now effective)****Status****Currently effective for babies born on or after April 1, 2024.****Development****Career — Health****Parental allowance eligibility reduced**

The taxable income threshold for parents' eligibility for the parental allowance ("Elterngeld") was reduced starting with babies born on or after April 1, 2024 — and again on April 1, 2025 — under cost-saving measures included in Germany's federal budget 2024.

The parental allowance was introduced in 2007 as a replacement for the child care allowance and provides financial support to parents for 14 months following the birth of their child. The 14-month period can be shared by both parents, with a minimum of two months and a maximum of 12 months allowance taken by one parent. The minimum and maximum monthly parental allowance payments are €300 and €1,800 respectively — these amounts are unchanged. Highlights of the changes include:

- Parents with joint taxable income exceeding €200,000 are no longer eligible for the parental allowance if their baby is born on or after April 1, 2024. For births on or after April 1, 2025, the amount will be reduced to €175,000. Previously, eligibility was capped at €300,000 of taxable income for births occurring on or after Sept. 1, 2021.
- The taxable income threshold for single parents is €150,000 if their baby is born on or after April 1, 2024. Previously, eligibility was capped at €250,000.
- Parents can claim the parental allowance at the same time for only one month until their baby is 12 months old. A longer simultaneous period is allowed in cases of multiple and premature births, and if parents receive the Parental Allowance Plus.

**Resources**

[ivan.badjev@mercer.com](mailto:ivan.badjev@mercer.com)


[Information on the parental allowance](#) (German) (Government, Dec. 29, 2023) and [FAQs](#) (German) (Government, Jan. 3, 2024)


**Greece (new)****Status****Currently effective****Development****Career****Minimum wage increased on April 1**



From April 1, 2024, the monthly gross minimum wage increased to €830, up from €780. A seniority supplement (5% to 10%) is also payable depending on an employee's employment status, and service.


**Resources**


[Information on minimum wage](#) (Greek) (Government)


Greece (updated)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>Group pension plan reforms now effective</b></p> <p>Changes to group pension plans in Greece were finalized by the parliament on Dec. 18, 2023, and took effect on Jan. 1, 2024. The measures are included in Law 5078/2023. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees can contribute up to 20% of their total cash compensation per year to all their pension plans — reduced from 30% under the old law. The employer's contribution is 14% and the employee pays 6%.</li> <li>• Self-employed individuals and contractors can contribute up to €20,000 across all their pension plans. The contribution cap will be adjusted annually on Dec. 31, in line with the consumer price index.</li> <li>• Employees can continue to deduct pension contributions from their taxable earnings, and the employers' contributions continue to be excluded from the employee's taxable income.</li> <li>• Benefits accumulated prior to these changes are taxed according to the previous law, but the new law applies to contributions made on or after Jan. 1, 2024.</li> <li>• The applicable taxation rates are progressive, depending on the number of years the individual has participated in the plan. They favor individuals with longer plan membership and restrict the tax relief available to individuals approaching retirement age.</li> <li>• Different taxation rates apply to benefits that are taken as a lump sum or as periodic payments, or if the benefits are partially withdrawn. The taxation rate for partial withdrawal (either as lump sum or periodic payments) does not apply to individuals older than 60 years, or in the event of redundancy or the employer's insolvency. For employees whose plan membership starts on or after age 55, and who partially withdraw their benefits by either taking a lump sum payment or periodic payments, the tax rate increases by 5% for each year that membership is below five years.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Law 5078/2023</a> (Greek) (Government) and <a href="#">Market alert: Changes to the tax regime applicable to occupational pension plans</a> (Mercer, March 7, 2024)
Hungary (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Medical suitability assessments no longer required</a> — key date: Sept. 1, 2024</li> </ul>

Ireland (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Employees have right to request remote and flexible working</b></p> <p>The right to request remote and flexible work in Ireland took effect on March 7, 2024, and the Workplace Relations Commission (“WRC”) issued its accompanying Code of Practice for Employers and Employees, as required by the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. The code provides guidance, FAQs, a template work-life balance policy and template request forms. Employees can request remote and flexible working from the first day of their employment, but they must work for six months before the start of any arrangement. Employers must keep records of arrangements for up to three years. Employers’ failure to follow the code is not an offence but will be admissible when considering an employment rights claim. The WRC will assess the process followed by employer when deciding on employees’ requests but will not evaluate the employer’s decision. Sanctions apply for breaches of the right to request remote and flexible working requests. Highlights include:</p> <p><b>Remote working</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All employees can make a request for remote working. Employees must submit their written request at least eight weeks before the start of the proposed remote working arrangement, and employers have four weeks to respond. Employees must state the reasons for the request and provide information about the suitability of their proposed work location (such as distance from the workplace and privacy considerations).</li> <li>• The code includes an extensive list of issues that employers should consider when deciding on employees’ requests, including the organization’s needs, and suitability of the employee and the role for remote work.</li> <li>• Employers can terminate remote work arrangements in certain circumstances, and employees can request to return to their previous work schedule earlier than planned.</li> </ul> <p><b>Flexible working</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees who have children, or who are responsible for children younger than 12 years (or up to age 16 if the child has a disability), or who provide personal care to support to a child or partners, or certain other dependents, can request flexible work. Flexible work includes several different ways of working, such as, job-sharing, reduced and compressed working hours, part-time work, and remote work.</li> <li>• Employers can request some information about the person for whom the employee cares and must respond in writing to requests within four weeks (this is extendable by a further four weeks). Employers are advised to follow the code’s remote working guidance when considering flexible working requests.</li> <li>• Employers can terminate a flexible working arrangement if the employee is not using the approved arrangement for the agreed purpose.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Code of practice for employers and employees</a> (WRC, March 2024) and <a href="#">Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023</a> (Statute Book, April 4, 2023)


Ireland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<b>Wealth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Changes to state pension</a> — key date: October 2024</li> </ul>
Israel (new)	
Status	 <b>Beginning Jan. 1, 2025</b>
Development	<b>Health</b> <p><b>Health insurance contributions to increase in 2025</b></p> <p>Health insurance contribution rates will increase in 2025 to 5.165% (up from 5% for the higher rate), and to 3.235% (up from 3.1%) for the lower rate. The increases are included in the amended health insurance law published on March 17, 2024.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Amended health insurance law</a> (Hebrew, March 17, 2024) (Government) and <a href="#">Health insurance rates</a> (National Insurance)
Kenya (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Health</b> <p><b>Collection of housing levy reinstated</b></p> <p>The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) announced on March 21, 2024, that employers must deduct the Affordable Housing Levy from employees' gross salaries and then pay it and the employer's contribution to the KRA, effective March 19, 2024.</p> <p>The levy is 1.5% calculated on gross salaries, matched by the employer, and must be paid by the ninth day following the end of the month in which the salary was due. The levy is included in the Affordable Housing Act, 2024 that was assented to on March 19, 2024. Kenya's Court of Appeal had ruled on Jan. 26, 2024, that employers had no legal basis for deducting the affordable housing levy from salaried employees — collection of the levy started in July 2023. Employers who deducted the levy in January 2024 were required to reimburse the full amount to employees.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Collection of affordable housing levy by Kenya Revenue Authority</a> (Kenya Revenue Authority, March 21, 2024)


Lithuania (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Additional leave for adoptive mothers introduced</a> — key date: July 1, 2024</li> </ul>
Mozambique (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <p><b>Revised labor law now effective</b></p> <p>Mozambique’s labor law — Law No. 13/2023 — took effect on Feb. 21, 2024 (180 days after the law’s publication). Law No. 23/2007 is repealed and the new measures include an expansion of severance pay, maternity and paternity leave, and restriction on the use of fixed-term contracts. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of workplace remote surveillance is prohibited if it is not required for property or worker safety, and if the employer has not provided their employees with written notification.</li> <li>Certain industry sectors are subject to both sector-specific labor laws and the new labor law.</li> <li>Employers with up to 100 employees can use fixed-term contracts for a maximum eight-year period following the establishment of the business (down from 10 years). Otherwise, fixed-term contracts are subject to restrictions. For example, employers must justify their use of fixed-term contracts or risk their conversion into open-ended contracts. The duration of such contracts is capped at two years, and they can be renewed twice. Fixed-term contracts must include a notice period in the event of their nonrenewal.</li> <li>Maternity leave is expanded to 90 calendar days, up from 60, but maternity benefit is paid only for the first 60 days. Female employees generally cannot be terminated during their pregnancy, and for up to one year after the end of their maternity leave.</li> <li>Fathers are entitled to seven days of unpaid paternity leave calculated over an 18-month period (previously, paternity leave was one day over a 24-month period). The leave is expanded to 60 days in the event of the mother’s death or incapacity.</li> <li>Employee absence is permitted in certain circumstances, such as the death of parents-in-law, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, or the employee’s illness.</li> <li>Paid annual leave is capped at 12 calendar days for employees during the first year of their employment, increasing to 30 days from the second year of their employment.</li> <li>Severance payments are expanded, and calculation of the payment is linked to the affected employees’ pay levels.</li> <li>Employment contracts can be suspended due to “force majeure” and unforeseeable circumstances.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Law No. 13/2023</a> (Portuguese) (Official Bulletin, August 25, 2023)


<b>Netherlands (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)</b>	
<b>Development</b>	<b>Wealth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Parliament agrees to significant occupational pension reforms</a> — key date: Jan. 1, 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Nigeria (new)</b>	
<b>Status</b>	 <b>Currently effective</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Career</b> <p><b>Introduction of Expatriate Employment Levy suspended</b></p> <p>The government announced on March 8, 2024, the temporary suspension of its Expatriate Employment Levy (EEL) to enable more consultation with stakeholders, and for a joint committee (including industry representatives) to review the EEL policy. The EEL was due to have taken effect on March 15, 2024, with employer compliance required by April 15, 2024. Highlights of the EEL include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies that employ expatriate workers in Nigeria would have to pay a financial levy under measures included in the Expatriate Employment Levy (“EEL”) handbook issued by the Federal Ministry of Interior on Feb. 27, 2024. The EEL was to have taken effect on March 15, 2024, and employers were to have registered their eligible employees by April 15, 2024.</li> <li>The EEL would be in addition to other current immigration requirements. Goals include promoting skill transfer and knowledge sharing between expatriate and local employees, increasing public/private sector collaboration and encouraging employers to prioritize their local workforce.</li> <li>Expatriates eligible for the EEL would have to be Nigerian residents employed for a minimum period of 183 days aggregated over one fiscal year. This would include employees who work temporarily in another country. Expatriates on short-term assignments of fewer than 183 days would be exempt.</li> <li>Employers would have to register their expatriate employees via the online portal and pay an annual levy of US\$15,000 for directors and US\$10,000 for other staff categories. Expatriate employees would be required to present their EEL card on entry and departure from Nigeria.</li> <li>Employers would have to maintain records of their expatriate employees (including details of their employment contract, salary and work permits), and file the information with the authorities.</li> </ul> <p>The Nigerian Immigration Service would determine the eligibility of expatriate employees for the EEL and would enforce it and conduct compliance audits. Financial and criminal penalties would apply for failure to comply, including the late submission of information, failure to register employees and renew the EEL, and information falsification.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	<a href="#">FG addresses stakeholders’ concerns on expatriate employment levy</a> (Minister of Interior, March 8, 2024)
<b>Nigeria (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)</b>	
<b>Development</b>	<b>Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Health insurance coverage to significantly expand</a> — key date: unknown</li> </ul>



<b>Oman (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)</b>	
<b>Development</b>	<b>Wealth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Social protection for foreign employees expanded</a> — key date: July 2024</li> </ul>
<b>Poland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)</b>	
<b>Development</b>	<b>Career</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Minimum wage to increase</a> — key date: July 1, 2024</li> </ul>
<b>South Africa (new)</b>	
<b>Status</b>	 <b>Currently effective</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Career</b> <b>May 29 public holiday for elections announced</b> The government has announced an additional public holiday on May 29, 2024 — the date of the national and provincial elections. Employees who work on that date will be entitled to double their normal wage for the day, or the employee's ordinary wage for the day "plus the amount earned by the employee for the time worked on that day." The holiday was created to encourage individuals to vote.
<b>Resources</b>	<a href="#">President proclaims election date and public holiday</a> (The Presidency, Feb. 23, 2024)
<b>South Africa (new)</b>	
<b>Status</b>	 <b>Currently effective</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Career — Health</b> <b>Tax guidance on fringe benefits, allowance updated</b> From March 1, 2024, employers must follow updated guidance on the taxation of fringe benefits. Issued by the South Africa Revenue (SARS), the guidance includes revised motor vehicle travel allowance (4.84 ZAR per kilometre) and subsistence allowances for travel inside and outside of South Africa — both are applicable to the 2025 assessment year. The guidance also includes the rules on the tax treatment of travel benefits during or before the 2018 tax year.
<b>Resources</b>	<a href="#">Guide for employers in respect of allowances (2025 tax year)</a> (SARS, March 1, 2024)




South Africa (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Earnings threshold increased</b></p> <p>From April 1, 2024, the annual earnings threshold increased to 254,371.67 ZAR, up from 241,110.59 ZAR (21,197.64 ZAR per month). Earnings include the employee’s regular annual salary before deductions (such as tax, pension and medical payments), but exclude overtime pay, employer contributions, transport and subsistence allowances. The earnings threshold determines which employment rights and protections apply to employees, and the increased threshold will result in more employees becoming subject to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and Labour Relations Act (LRA). Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employees earning more than the earnings threshold are excluded from certain entitlements and protections under the BCEA. These include overtime pay; ordinary hours of work; compressed working week; hours of work averaging; meal intervals; daily and weekly rest periods; Sunday pay; night work; pay; and pay for working on a public holiday that is not an ordinary working day for an employee.</li><li>• Employees earning more than the earnings threshold must refer disputes about the Employment Equity Act to the Labour Court</li><li>• The LRA applies to employees earning the earnings threshold or less, and who work in atypical job roles (such as employees provided by a temporary work agency, or who work in part-time or fixed-term roles).</li></ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Increase in earnings threshold 2024</a> (NEASA, March 11, 2024)



South Africa	
Status	 Consultation is open until May 2, 2024.
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Consultation on sectoral numerical targets under employment equity law</b></p> <p>The South African government published on Feb. 1, 2024, a second draft regulation on setting five-year sectoral numerical targets for “designated employers” with comments invited through May 2, 2024. The Employment Equity Amendment Act 4 of 2022 (EEA) that was signed into law on April 14, 2023, allows the government to identify and set numerical employment equity targets in 18 national economic sectors. A first set of proposed targets for eligible employers was published for consultation in May 2023. Highlights of the second consultation document include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single percentage target is proposed for each economic sector, differentiated by gender. The proposed targets refer to “designated groups,” and do not distinguish between designated racial groups.</li> <li>• The proposed targets would focus on top four managerial levels, professional qualified and skilled employees and people with disabilities. No targets are proposed for semi-skilled and unskilled individuals, and foreigners are excluded from the workforce profile.</li> <li>• The proposed five-year sectoral targets are minimum targets. “Designated employers” would be measured against the annual targets set towards meeting the five-year target.</li> <li>• “Designated employers” are generally employers with at least 50 employees, but the proposed regulations clarify that employers with between 1 and 49 employees are a “designated employer” if they are an organ of state, or if they are bound by a collective agreement that appoints it as a designated employer for purposes of the EEA.</li> </ul> <p>Guidance and examples of reasonable or justifiable grounds for not meeting the targets are included.</p>
Resources	<p><a href="mailto:boipelo.setswe@mercer.com">boipelo.setswe@mercer.com</a></p> <p><a href="#">Draft regulations on proposed sectoral numerical targets</a> (Official Gazette, Feb. 1, 2024)</p>
South Africa (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Two-pot pension changes announced</a> — key date: Sept. 1, 2024</li> </ul>

Spain (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Protections for LGBTQ employees enacted</b></p> <p>By March 2, 2024, companies with more than 50 employees should have introduced certain equality measures for LGBTI people, including an LGBTI anti-harassment policy. Law 4/2023 of Feb. 28, 2022, took effect on March 2, 2023, and aims to complement current gender equality laws. Implementing regulations are expected to clarify certain measures but have not yet been published. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers must negotiate an action plan and antiharassment protocol with their employee representatives.</li> <li>• Social partners are encouraged to include measures aimed at promoting LGBTI equality and complaint procedures into collective bargaining agreements.</li> <li>• Employers are encouraged to prepare ethics codes and protocols to prevent discrimination.</li> <li>• Actions that directly or indirectly discriminate against an LGBTI individual on the grounds of their sexual orientation and identity, gender expression, or sexual characteristics, will be null and void.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">Law 4/2023 of Feb. 28, 2022 (Spanish) (Government)</a>
Switzerland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hourly minimum wage to be introduced in Zurich and Winterthur</a> — key date: unknown</li> </ul> <p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Employer compensation for high sick-pay costs to phase out</a> — key date: during 2024</li> <li>• <a href="#">Paid leave introduced in Geneva</a> — key date: effective date unknown</li> </ul> <p><b>Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Occupational pension reforms pass parliament</a> — key date: effective date unknown</li> </ul>

United Arab Emirates — Dubai International Finance Centre (DIFC) (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Wealth</b></p> <p><b>DIFC employers must make Qualifying Scheme pension contributions for employees who are UAE/GCC nationals</b></p> <p>Employers registered in the Dubai International Finance Centre (DIFC) must now make “top-up” payments into a DIFC Qualifying Scheme for eligible employees who are nationals of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) or of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and who are registered with the General Pension and Social Security Authority (GPSSA). The amendment is included in DIFC Law No. 1 of 2024 (Amendment Law) that amends Part 10 of the DIFC Employment Law (Law No. 2 of 2019, as amended), and was enacted on March 1, 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the GPSSA’s pension law, the contributions for private sector UAE national employees are calculated on a maximum salary cap of 70,000 AED. Monthly salary that exceeds 70,000 AED is not included in the GPSSA pension calculations. Similar maximum caps are applicable to employees who are nationals of other GCC countries. The GPSSA contribution caps may have resulted in lower contribution amounts for DIFC employees who are UAE or GCC nationals compared to contributions for non-UAE/GCC employees participating in a DIFC Qualifying Scheme (such as the DIFC Employment Workplace Savings Plan (DEWS)).</li> <li>Under the new law, employers continue to pay their usual GPSSA contributions and must now also pay top-up contributions into a DIFC Qualifying Scheme for eligible employees whose monthly pension contribution is less than the amount that would have been paid into a Qualifying Scheme, if the employee had not been a UAE or GCC national. The employer’s “top-up” contribution must be paid if it is 1,000 AED or more — if it is less, there is no requirement to pay the adjusted amount into a Qualifying Scheme.</li> </ul>
Resources	<a href="#">DIFC Law No. 1 of 2024 (Amendment Law)</a> (Government) and <a href="#">Monthly contribution employer guideline</a> (Government)
United Kingdom (UK) (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<p><b>Career</b></p> <p><b>Minimum wage rates for 2024 increased</b></p> <p>Increased minimum wage rates (the National Living Wage — NLW) took effect on April 1, 2024. The NLW is paid to individuals aged 21 and older and is now £11.44/hour (up from £10.42); £8.06/hour for individuals aged 18 to 20 (up from £7.49); and £6.40/hour for individuals aged 16 to 17 (up from £5.28). The rate for apprentices is £6.40/hour (up from £5.28) for individuals younger than 19 years, or in the first year of an apprenticeship. The daily allowable accommodation deduction is £9.99 (up from £9.10) for employer-provided accommodation. From April 2024, the NLW is extended to include 21 and 22 year olds.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">The national minimum wage in 2024</a> (Government, March 27, 2024)

UK (new)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career — Wealth</b> <b>National Insurance rates reduced</b> <p>From April 6, 2024, the National Insurance (NI) rate for employees is reduced to 8%, down from 10% under a measure announced in the government's Spring Budget 2024. This reduction follows a 2% NI reduction previously announced in the Autumn Statement 2023 that took effect in January 2024. . The government estimates that both NI reductions will save the average worker earning £35,400 per year over £900.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Spring Budget 2024</a> (Treasury, March 6, 2024)
UK (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <b>Stronger job protection from redundancy to be given to employees on maternity leave</b> <p>Employees on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave now have stronger protection from redundancy under measures included in the Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Act — the act received Royal Assent on May 24, 2023, and took effect on April 6, 2024.</p> <p>Protection is expanded to employees from the day they inform their employer about their pregnancy to 18 months after the birth, and also to employees on adoption, shared or parental leave. Previously, employers facing a layoff situation were required to offer suitable vacancies (where they existed) to employees who were on maternity leave.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">Protection From Redundancy (Pregnancy And Family Leave) Act 2023</a> (Government, May 24, 2023)
UK (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <b>Employees can take carers' leave</b> <p>Employees who have a dependent with long-term care needs can take five days of unpaid leave per year under measures took effect on April 6, 2024.</p> <p>The leave can be used for a spouse, partner, child, parent or someone who lives in the same household, or a person who relies on the employee for care. Employees are entitled to the carers' leave from the first day of their employment and can self-certify their eligibility — they do not have to provide any evidence to their employer. The leave can be taken in a block of five days, or in individual or half-days.</p>
Resources	<a href="#">The carers' leave act 2023</a> (Government, May 24, 2023) and <a href="#">The carers' leave regulations 2024</a> (Government)

UK (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p><b>Career — Health</b></p> <p><b>Law makes it easier to request flexible working requests</b></p> <p>Employees can request flexible working from the first day of employment under measures in the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 — the act received Royal Assent on July 20, 2023 and took effect on April 6, 2024. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) published an updated statutory Code of Practice on handling requests for flexible working and the accompanying nonstatutory guidance. Flexible working includes changes to working hours, such as part-time, term-time, flexi-time, compressed hours, or adjusting start and finish times. It can also include flexibility about the employee's work location, including working from home or in a satellite office to reduce their commuting time. Highlights of the act include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No qualifying service is required before employees can ask for flexible work — currently, employees must have 26 weeks' continuous service.</li><li>• Employees can make up to two flexible working requests per year — currently, employees can make only one request.</li><li>• Employees no longer have to explain the effects of flexible working on their employer when submitting their request.</li><li>• Employers have up two months to respond to an employee's flexible working request, down from three.</li><li>• Employers must consult with the employee before rejecting a flexible working request.</li></ul> <p>However, the act does not change the statutory list of eight permitted business reasons for rejecting an employee's request. These include additional cost burdens to the employer, detrimental effects on meeting customer demand, the inability to reorganize work among other staff, the inability to recruit additional staff, a detrimental impact on quality or performance, insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work and planned structural changes.</p>
Resources	<p><u><a href="#">Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023</a></u> (Government, July 20, 2023); <u><a href="#">Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023</a></u> (Government, Dec. 5, 2023); and <u><a href="#">Code of Practice on handling requests for flexible working</a></u> (ACAS, Jan. 11, 2024)</p>

UK (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective.</b>
Development	<b>Wealth</b> <b>Some pension measures from Autumn Statement now effective</b> The Autumn Statement included several pension-related announcements, with many measures building on announcements included in the July 2023 Mansion House speech. The pension measures that took effect on April 6, 2024, are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The tax on returns of DB refunds to employers will reduce to 25%, down from 35%, from April 6, 2024.</li><li>• The abolition of the lifetime allowance (LTA) (this follows the abolition of LTA charges in April 2023).</li></ul>
Resources	<a href="mailto:anne.bennett@mercer.com">anne.bennett@mercer.com</a> <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2023</a> (Government)
UK — Great Britain (updated)	
Status	 <b>Currently effective</b>
Development	<b>Career — Health</b> <b>Flexible statutory paternity leave increased</b> Fathers or partners now have more flexibility in how they take their two weeks of statutory paternity leave under measures included in the Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024. The regulations took effect on March 8, 2024, for babies where the expected week of birth begins after April 6, 2024, and to adoption placements occurring after the same date. The measures apply in England, Scotland and Wales but not in Northern Ireland. Highlights include: Fathers or partners can take their two weeks of statutory paternity leave in either one block of two weeks, or two separate blocks of one week. Previously, employees were allowed to take only one period of paternity leave — either one or two continuous weeks. Leave can be taken at any time in the first year of birth or placement for adoption. Previously, statutory paternity leave had to be taken within the first eight weeks. Individuals must notify their employers about their entitlement to paternity leave 15 weeks before the birth, and then provide 28 days of notice before the dates of their leave periods. Currently, individuals must provide their leave dates 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. The notification for adoptions remains unchanged — within seven days of being notified of the adoption or matched for adoption.
Resources	<a href="#">The paternity leave (amendment) regulations 2024</a> (Government)

## UK (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

### Development

#### Career

- [Certain workers to have more rights to request more predictable hours](#) — key date: autumn 2024
- [Employers have new duty to prevent workplace sexual harassment](#) — key date: autumn 2024

#### Career — Health

- [Employees to be allowed neonatal care leave](#) — key date: expected April 2025
- [Benefits-in-kind digitization reporting confirmed](#) —key date: April 2026

#### Wealth

- [Pension auto enrollment to expand, reducing eligible age and abolishing earnings threshold](#) — key date: unknown
- [New defined benefit publishing regime published](#) — key date: Sept. 22, 2024
- [Pension dashboard, connection deadlines change](#) — key date: Oct. 31, 2026





**Mercer LLC**

1166 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10036

[www.mercer.com](http://www.mercer.com)

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