

# OpenVoiceNews U.K.

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

## UK Moves to Ban NDAs in Workplace Harassment Cases

July 15, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



DOWNLOAD IPFS

The United Kingdom is poised to prohibit non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in cases of workplace harassment under the proposed Employment Rights Bill. This move targets a practice increasingly scrutinised for shielding misconduct rather than protecting legitimate business interests.

NDAs are legal contracts designed to safeguard sensitive commercial information, such as trade secrets or intellectual property. They typically include confidentiality and non-disparagement clauses, restricting what signatories can disclose. However, evidence suggests employers have exploited these agreements to silence victims of harassment, including sexual misconduct and discrimination.

According to a 2024 report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 22% of employers have used NDAs to manage allegations of sexual harassment. Such practices have drawn sharp criticism for enabling toxic workplace cultures to persist unchecked. The proposed legislation aims to render any confidentiality clauses in settlement agreements void if they prevent workers from discussing allegations of harassment or discrimination.

The Labour-led government, keen to project a reformist image, has framed the ban as a step toward workplace fairness. Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, in a recent statement, declared, “It is time we stamped this practice out – and this government is taking action to make that happen.” Similarly, Employment Rights Minister Justin Madders claimed the measure would “give millions of workers confidence that inappropriate behaviour in the workplace will be dealt with, not hidden.”

Critics, however, question whether the government’s focus on NDAs distracts from deeper structural issues, such as inadequate enforcement of existing labour laws or the slow pace of cultural change in workplaces. The Employment Rights Bill, while ambitious, risks being seen as a headline-grabbing gesture if not paired with robust mechanisms to address root causes.

The proposal has garnered support from campaigners. Zelda Perkins, founder of Can’t Buy My Silence UK, hailed it as a “huge milestone.” In a statement, she said, “Above all, this victory belongs to the people who broke their NDAs, who risked everything to speak the truth when they were told they couldn’t. Without their courage, none of this would be happening.” Perkins’ campaign has long highlighted how NDAs can perpetuate silence around abuse.

Ben Willmott, head of public policy at the CIPD, also endorsed the amendment but urged caution. In a recent interview, he noted, “While we welcome this development, we would also urge employers to tackle the root causes of such issues so all employees can feel safe and

protected at work.” He stressed the importance of ethical NDA use and called for organisations to establish clear channels for employees to raise concerns early.

The proposed ban marks a significant shift, aligning with growing public demand for transparency and accountability. If passed, it could empower victims to speak out without fear of legal repercussions. Yet, as Willmott pointed out, legislation alone cannot dismantle entrenched workplace cultures that enable harassment. Employers must prioritise prevention through training, clear policies, and leadership accountability.

Sceptics also note that the government’s broader labour policies, including the Employment Rights Bill, face scrutiny for their feasibility and enforcement. Without rigorous oversight, the NDA ban could become another well-intentioned but under-delivered promise. For now, the proposal signals intent, but its success hinges on implementation and cultural change beyond the statute books.