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Government to Ban Gagging Orders in Harassment Cases Amid Growing Pressure

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The government is introducing new legislation to prevent the misuse of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in cases of workplace harassment and discrimination. The move comes after years of campaigning, ensuring victims and witnesses can speak out without fear of legal consequences.

New legal reforms are set to ban the use of non-disclosure agreements in instances of workplace abuse, in a long-overdue move to prioritise transparency and protect employees. The proposal, aimed at tackling the growing misuse of NDAs, will prevent employers from using legal threats to silence victims of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. For too long, NDAs have been wielded as tools to suppress legitimate complaints and shield corporate reputations, rather than uphold justice.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner confirmed the government's intentions to outlaw confidentiality clauses that gag employees. While Rayner framed it as part of Labour's employment agenda, critics argue that action of this nature should have been implemented much earlier, especially given past government inaction on workplace standards. The move reflects mounting public and cross-party pressure to restore integrity in employment law and stop institutions from covering up misconduct through legal silencing tactics.

The change follows significant campaigning by advocacy group Can't Buy My Silence, co-founded by Zelda Perkins, who famously broke her silence over former Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's misconduct. Perkins described the legislation as "a huge milestone," adding that, "to see this government accept the need for nationwide legal change shows that they have listened." However, she also warned that enforcement mechanisms must be "watertight" to prevent continued abuse of loopholes.

The proposed law will not only apply to victims of workplace misconduct but also extend to colleagues or witnesses who have previously been barred from speaking out. The plan, which is now progressing through

Parliament, will make it unlawful for any employer to demand or enforce an NDA in situations involving harassment or discrimination.

While the current administration claims credit for the move, observers note it was years of pressure from civil society, not proactive policymaking, that has driven the change. Many argue the government's response remains reactive, not strategic, and question its broader commitment to protecting workplace rights without creating unintended consequences for businesses or employers facing unfounded claims.

Still, the new legal safeguards mark a significant step forward in restoring free speech and fairness in employment. Campaigners are urging swift implementation and close oversight, arguing that transparency should never come at the cost of justice or accountability.