

annual report 2025

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Lord John Hendy KC

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James Harrison

INTRODUCTION

This year, the work of the IER has had to pivot. Instead of us analysing government attacks on workers' rights as we have done for the last 14 years, we were now in a position where many of our policy ideas on workers' rights were being discussed more widely. This shows the cumulative impact on labour law policy that our small but effective organisation has had over the last 35 years of our operation, and it is one that we should celebrate, as well as congratulate our hard-working and dedicated experts who volunteer their time and expertise for us for little or no return.

The new government tabled their Employment Rights Bill (ERB) in the House of Commons in October last year. The Bill has been praised and criticised by different elements of the labour movement in equal measure. The role of the IER, as a think tank informing the debate on labour law and employment rights, has been to ascertain what the new industrial and legal landscape is likely to look like in the years after the Bill becomes an Act of parliament. As ever, the IER has risen to the occasion, to make sure that the facts and working realities for future generations of workers and their unions, get separated from the spin. To do this, we have also produced an array of accessible and informative outputs to break down barriers to understanding the Bill, which are detailed in this report.

ADMINISTRATION

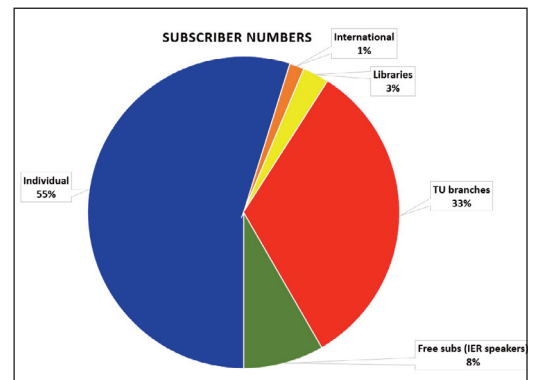
After being appointed as Acting Director in February 2024, James was appointed as permanent Director of the IER in the July. In April 2025 James has been employed by the IER for 10 years. He is thrilled to have taken up the Director appointment, and looks forward to the challenges ahead.

It became clear during this year that our staffing capacity had become somewhat constricted, and was likely to constrict further with Derek set to retire later this year. To rectify this, we have appointed Donya Jeyabalasingham as our new Communications Officer, and James Hughes as our new Administrative Assistant, who will eventually replace Derek later this year.

MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS

Our membership stands at 82 (+4), of whom 40 (+1) are trade-union representatives.

We have a total of 300 paid subscribers. Of these, 106 (=) are trade-union organisations, 178 (-1) are



individuals [28 (-4) of whom are on reduced-rate subscriptions for unwaged individuals]; 9 (=) are commercial libraries; 5 (=) are overseas, and 2 (=) pay a commercial lawyers' sub.

Multiple-user licences for online-only subscription are held by Unite UONC, the AEP and the TUC.

Payment methods

Of our paying subscribers, 127 (=) pay by direct debit; 83 (+6) by PayPal; 58 (-3) by BACS or standing order; 9 (-4) by credit card and 13 (-10) by cheque.

In addition, there are currently 27 complimentary subscriptions, offered for example to speakers at our events.

We have maintained our presence at trade-union conferences as far as staffing has allowed, and the rate of attrition in subscriptions has noticeably slowed, despite an increase in subscription rates – for the first time in a decade – by an average of 25 per cent, to keep up with the additional costs that inflation has caused over time.

PROJECTS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC-POLICY WORK

In partnership with IER Ireland, we are about ¾ of the way through our project with the European Transport Federation (ETF) entitled '*Delivering Fair Transport for All*'. The objectives of the project include mapping key logistics and e-commerce companies, and the key workplace issues throughout the logistics supply chain, with a mind to inform the ETF's union organising strategy. This project should be concluded, with the final report being submitted to the ETF in autumn of 2025.

The 2nd phase of our project on '*Redistribution of working time*' has now been completed. This was sent out to subscribers and launched at STUC in April

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IER
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Publications

2025. We hope for the roadmap it demonstrates on negotiating reductions of working time (with no loss of pay) to be useful across different unions and employment sectors.

Our commission with the ASLEF union to update our previous *'On track with diversity'* has been delayed. Through discussion with ASLEF and the authors, we agreed that with rail reforms being on the horizon, it would be better to wait until things were clearer. A revised schedule for the report is now being worked out with the authors and ASLEF.

By far the biggest chunk of our work this year has been on public policy around the ERB. IER experts have been tracking the Bill in its various stages, and informing the debate on how it might be improved to deliver for workers.

As we approached the time the Bill was initially published, a lot of work went into formulating and producing the new IER podcast, kindly supported by Thompsons Solicitors. We produced 7, 30-minute audio episodes discussing various topics

- The Employment Rights Bill: A New Era For Workers – Showing the need for pro-worker legislation
- Getting the Bill Right: Lessons From Legislation Past
- Worker Status, Worker Rights: Closing The Gaps In The Employment Rights Bill
- Laws Fit For Workplace Equality
- Fire and Rehire: Labour's Broken Promise?
- Does Labour's Employment Rights Bill Deliver Sectoral Bargaining?
- Strike Rights: Are UK Workers Getting A Raw Deal?

Our experts wrote an excellent briefing on the Bill when the government first draft was published. This was to make it more accessible for the labour movement to understand, due to the extraordinary length of the initial Bill (which got significantly longer as government amendments were added).

Our legal experts valiantly trawled through the Bill at its various stages, line by line, in order to inform potential amendments for the trade union movement to consider. This was no easy feat, especially after hundreds of pages of government amendments were published. Our sincere thanks go to the experts involved in this laborious yet crucial process, as it couldn't have been done without their valuable time and expertise.

We have formed a panel of expert economists, who have been particularly useful in terms of busting the myths of the employers' associations when trying to scare the press around pro-worker legislation.

We have also produced several fact sheets on the Bill, for more public consumption, around single issues like:

1. Single status of worker
2. Trade union recognition
3. Zero-hour contracts
4. Fire and rehire
5. Trade union access
6. Collective bargaining
7. Industrial action
8. Equality
9. Day-1 rights

We wanted these fact sheets to be a resource for trade unionists to be able to understand clear issues affecting their members at a glance. The fact sheets were placed on the website, sent out in our newsletter, plugged across social media channels, and given out at union conferences.

We produced a resource page for our website, to put all of our resources on the Bill in one easy to see place. This has been updated and sent out in our newsletter as new content has been added to it.

By invitation we have had several interactions with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) around various elements of the Bill, on:

- Creating a modern framework for industrial relations
- Fair pay
- The macro-economic effects of making work pay
- One sided flexibility
- Voice at work
- Rights at work

This has taken the form of zoom meetings, and written follow-ups to the department. We know for a fact that DBT have used the macro-economic information around their modelling in the impact assessment for the ERB.

Again by invitation, we have interacted with the policy making team in the Cabinet Office around the Equality (Race & Disability) Bill, having IER experts at Zoom meetings, and coordinating written submissions for the department to consider when drafting the Bill and the Regulations.

In partnership with Citizen Advice bureau, we were part of a hybrid meeting with Margaret Beels OBE, Director of Labour Market Enforcement at the Department for Business and Trade. This meeting was specifically about the need to sort out the issue of worker status in order to close many of the loopholes employers will exploit when the ERB is brought in.

We continue to track the Bill through the House of Lords, where our Chairperson John Hendy has spoke on a number of issues around the Bill. Our communications team have been clipping these excellent contributions and putting them out across social media, and on our website.

PUBLICATIONS

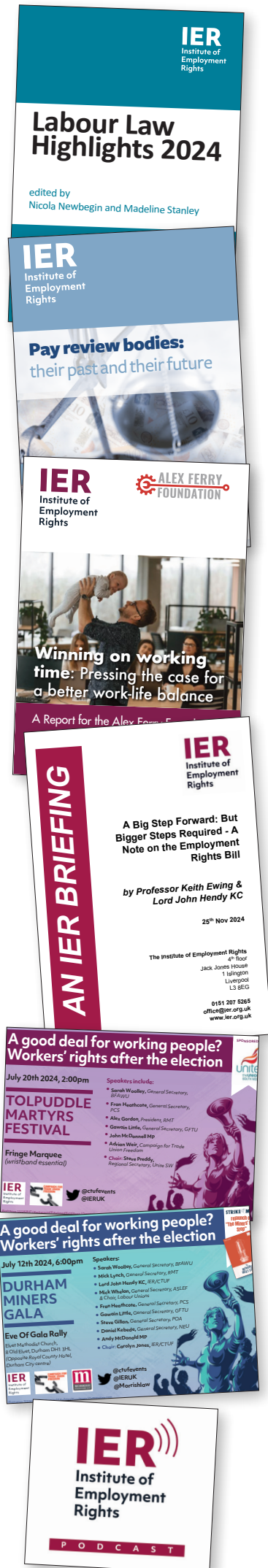
Due to our need to focus on public policy work, our publication production did suffer last year. Unfortunately we only produced 3 of our usual 6 publications:

- **Redistribution of working time #2** – Prof Phil Taylor
- **Labour law highlights 2024** – Old Square Chambers team
- **Pay review bodies and their effectiveness** – Andrew Moretta

We hope to get publication production back up to normal levels within the next year.

PUBLICATIONS PLANNED FOR 2025/2026

- **Shareholder vs workers right** – Ben Crawford and Jamie Haughton
- **On Track with Diversity 2025** – Nadia Motraghi KC and Ijeoma Omambala KC
- **Delivering Fair Transport for All** – Daniel Blackburn
- **More tbc**



CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Following the encouraging post-pandemic uptick in attendance at our events in 2023-24, we maintained our cautious approach in running events that have historically been the most popular.

- Employment Law Update 2023 – 16 November 2023, Liverpool
- Employment Law Update 2023 – 22 November 2023, London
- Case Law Update 2024 – 15 February 2024, London
- Case Law Update 2024 – 29 February 2024, Manchester

Income (before expenses) from our paid events was £8,675 from 129 attendees, short of the £10,000 target, but still a useful and viable element of the Institute's work, which attracts overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees. After costs there was a £5,252 surplus from the four paid events.

We also held a free event - an evening seminar entitled *'Trump, neoliberal populism and labour law: lessons for the UK?' – a conversation with Professor Matthew Finkin of the University of Illinois and Dr Julieta Lobato of the University of Buenos Aires and currently researching at Glasgow University.* The meeting was held at the NEU head office in London on 18 March, and was also successfully streamed worldwide and recorded for upload to the website.

EVENTS FOR 2025-2026

The 2025-26 events programme is currently being planned, and details will be announced shortly in the weekly newsletter.

Communications & digital development

Over the last year, our comms strategy has, of course, been focused primarily on explanations and analysis of the new government's Employment Rights Bill (ERB). Since the election of a Labour government in July 2024, the Bill has often been front page news, and that has put the IER and its work at the forefront of debates about the translation of the New Deal for Working People that featured in Labour's manifesto in 2024 into legislative form.

Press / Media

In terms of 'print' media, it has been difficult to get our arguments covered in mainstream outlets, such as the Guardian, Independent and Mirror - apart from some discussion of specific aspects of the Bill related to debates within the Labour Party around its publication in October 2024 – particularly over zero hours contracts and fire and rehire. However, there was some interest generated by the release of our podcast series around the same time – and several political correspondents covered the themes raised in the podcasts.

The Morning Star, as usual, was much more consistent in its coverage, publishing a series of articles by Professor Keith Ewing and Lord John Hendy KC tracing the progress of the Bill and identifying the gaps in the

legislation. In addition, the Star published articles by Andy McDonald MP and our Director, James Harrison, outlining the history of the New Deal for Working People and the improvements needed to make it comprehensive and watertight. We have a developing relationship with a set of left, online outlets who cover industrial relations issues, such as Novara Media, Left Foot Forward, Byline Times, and Labour Outlook. This group of outlets has consistently engaged with our arguments and given a space for the more in-depth analysis of the ERB to be aired.

Over the last six months, we have built a partnership with Freshwater marketing and communications, which has resulted in a tailoring and broader reach for our Press Releases. We have been really happy with this partnership, which hopefully will continue on an informal basis.

Social Media Numbers

The activity around the Bill seems to have had some effect on our social media numbers.

1. **Facebook** has increased slightly from 2,108 in July 2024 to 2,169 in June 2025 in November (+3%) – a small shift over the last 12 months.
2. Our **X** (formerly Twitter) account stood at 5,996 in July 2024 and now stands at 5,799 (-3%). It had dipped below that figure, as many progressive accounts left X, but has recovered a little since then.

Over the last year, we added five platforms:

3. **LinkedIn**, which currently stands at 448 followers (up from 247 in July 2024 – +81%).
4. **Instagram** with 566 followers (up from 333 in July 2024 – +70%).
5. **Threads**, where the IER has attracted 148 followers (up from 84 in July 2024 – +76%).
6. **Bluesky**, where we now have 185 followers (0 in July 2024).
7. **TikTok**, where we now have 775 followers (0 in July 2024).
8. **YouTube**, with 187 subscribers (up from 128 in June 2024). Over the past year, IER uploads accrued 6,187 views

In particular, the rapid increase in followers on TikTok has been interesting. It is a platform which is primarily video based, with a much younger audience, but some of the IER's videos have had impressive viewing figures.

Mailchimp / newsletter

Last summer, we decided to trial a transfer from Mailman to Mailchimp (our hosting software) to send out our newsletter communications. This has helped give us much better data on this regular communication with our members, subscribers, and supporters. Subscriptions to the newsletter have been fairly steady, with a slight increase over the last year from 4,885 to 4,942. The current open rate (those who open the email to read the content) for our newsletter is 36.5% - again an increase over the last 12 months (up from 31.5%). Across all industries, Mailchimp's open rate is significantly lower – at around 21%, so it's clear that we have an engaged readership

and that the newsletter is a vital part of keeping our wider network in touch with the latest developments and IER work.

Podcast

Our podcast series was produced with the help of Creative Kin. We were grateful for the support of Thompson's Solicitors in the making and distribution of the podcast.

The episodes were very well received and played an important part in setting the tone of the debate around the ERB. The feedback from many quarters was that it was an accessible and engaging way to explore the issues around the legislation. It also gave us some excellent social media content, with clips that illustrated the nub of the arguments being made, which had a great deal of engagement on social media (the majority of our most popular posts between October 2024 and January 2025 were clips taken from the video footage of the podcast episodes and we are currently sharing additional clips from all episodes, and tailoring them to ongoing debates around the Employment Right Bill).

We still have some analysis to do on the podcasts, as we have a host of data gathered, and at that point we will make a decision on what happens next: whether we explore options around another series or leave it as a standalone piece of work.

CONCLUSION

The amount of time and coordination that all the above timely public policy work has required is not to be underestimated. That being said, it has been important for IER to track and analyse the Bill. As originators of the ideas that eventually morphed into Making Work Pay, it is important for us to track whether they have been implemented properly or not, in order for us to know what might come next.

In a year with many twists and turns, the IER staff did an excellent job in accommodating the shifting workloads required of them. Our sincere thanks go to all the staff for supporting our important work and each other during this very busy year.

As the ERB goes between the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and gains royal assent, we will continue to track its progress and seriously analyse the real-world impacts on workers and their unions.



IER Officers & EC 2024

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Carolyn Jones

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IER Budget Report 2024-25

Year to 31st March 2025

£s	Budget 2024-25	Actual Q4 2024/25	Actual Q4 2023/24
INCOME			
Sales of Publications	8,000	2,847	7,694
Donations	97,000	100,344	99,468
Subscriptions	22,500	18,513	22,050
Sponsorship	1,500	2,300	1,790
Seminar/online Events	11,000	8,640	10,999
Royalties	500	298	248
Commissioned Work	10,000	10,000	0
Project Development	19,000	9,228	6,322
Advertising	350	360	360
TOTAL INCOME	169,850	152,530	148,930
EXPENDITURE			
Printing: Promotional (inc packs & publicity)	4,500	4,434	2,788
Printing: Publications	12,500	3,829	7,060
Design Work	4,000	1,865	2,691
Salaries	100,000	81,661	99,742
Rent	7,500	3,827	3,408
Sundries	3,000	2,788	2,786
Advertising	2,000	2,789	1,238
Insurance	950	831	803
Room Hire (& refshts)	800	1,704	789
Professional/project Fees	10,000	8,101	9,511
C&E Hotels	2,000	726	2,070
C&E Fares	500	0	786
Travel	3,000	2,890	2,557
Telephones	1,000	843	311
Office Stationery	1,500	513	1,309
Postage: Couriers	800	400	252
Postage: Mailing	6,000	3,489	4,147
Repairs & maintenance	0	0	0
IT Development	7,700	8,161	4,412
Bank Charges	600	-361	569
Moving Costs	1,500	0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	169,850	128,490	147,227
Surplus/deficit	0	24,040	1,704
Money in bank		94,533	72,494
Bills to be paid		1,621	1,455
Invoices owed to us		2,412	1,878
Donation invoices owed		0	0