

WRC Annual Report Highlights Compliance Risks and Record Enforcement Activity

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) published its 2025 Annual Report in April. This year's edition highlights a year of intensified enforcement and growing Employee appetite to assert their employment rights. The latest findings from the WRC send a strong message to Organisations in the context of their employment law compliance which continues to grow more involved with many Organisations struggling to manage their exposure to increasing non-compliance risks.

Increased Inspection and Enforcement Activity

The WRC concluded 5,145 inspection cases in 2025, identifying breaches of employment law in 1,775 instances. These inspections involved 5,596 workplace visits and resulted in 6,571 contraventions. While most Employers were compliant or rectified issues during the inspection process, non-compliance continued to result in enforcement action.

Prosecution activity increased significantly, with 223 cases brought before the courts in 2025 representing an increase of 27.5% on the previous year. Of these, 183 prosecutions were successful, representing an 82% success rate.

Recovery of Unpaid Wages

The WRC Inspectorate recovered €1,578,924 in unpaid wages in 2025.

Breakdown of Complaints Received

Over the course of 2025, the WRC received 10,559 Complaint Applications representing 19,068 individual complaints, which is an average of 2 individual/specific complaints per complaint application. This represents a 44% increase of Complaint Applications whilst the individual complaints increased by 28% compared to 2024 as a Complainant can make more than one complaint on a Complaint Application.

Of the 19,068 specific complaints in 2025:

- 26% relate to Pay issues
- 17% relate to Unfair Dismissal
- 14% relate to Discrimination/Equality/Equal Status
- 9% relate to Terms and Conditions of Employment
- 8% relate to Working Time
- 8% relate to Trade Disputes/IR issues

Referrals Under the Employment Equality Act

In 2025, 1,492 complaints were referred under the Employment Equality legislation citing 1,995 grounds of discrimination (more than one ground of discrimination can be made on the individual complaint). This was an increase of 30% on complaints received compared to 2024. Disability, Race and Gender remained the three most frequently cited grounds in complaints referred under the Employment Equality Act to the WRC. The Disability ground accounted for the highest proportion of referrals at 31%, marking a 52% increase on 2024. This was followed by Gender (20%) and Race (19%).

Key Compliance Priorities for Organisations

The increasing activity of the WRC emphasises that employment law compliance can no longer be treated as a periodic or reactive exercise. Instead, it requires continuous attention, regular oversight, and a proactive strategy embedded across an Organisation.

Based on the key risks identified in this years' annual report, priorities for Organisations could include:

- Conducting regular audits of payroll, working time, and record-keeping practices
- Ensuring dismissal, disciplinary, and grievance procedures are fully compliant and consistently applied
- Implementing comprehensive equality policies, with particular focus on disability and reasonable accommodation
- Training managers to recognise and appropriately respond to employment law risks
- Reviewing contracts, handbooks, and policies to reflect current legislation and Codes of Practice

Conclusion: Prevention is Better Than Cure

The figures in this year's WRC annual report demonstrate that its enforcement activity continues to increase, employment-related complaints continue to rise, and expectations on Employers remain higher than ever. Organisations that fail to take appropriate steps to protect their position against the risks of non-compliance are exposed not only to financial and legal penalties, but also reputational damage and disruption to their operations. It is best not to wait for a WRC inspection or an Employee complaint to expose gaps in employment law compliance. By taking proactive steps now to review, strengthen, and future-proof your Organisation's employment practices, you can protect your business against employment-related risks.

How Adare Trusted People Partners Can Help

Our services include tailored HR and employment law advice delivered by experienced and expert HR practitioners. Support and guidance is provided to enable Organisations to case manage individual and collective employment issues under all areas of HR and employment law including:

- Employment law compliance throughout the Employee lifecycle
- Contracts of Employment, Policies & Procedures, Managing Compliance
- HR Best Practice
- Advice on day-to-day matters
- Dedicated Client Manager
- Mitigation of Risk & Financial Liability
- Help desk support
- Commercial HR advice tailored for your Organisation

Adare is a team of expert-led Employment Law, Industrial Relations and best practice Human Resource Management consultants. If your Organisation needs advice, support, or guidance about employment law compliance, upcoming pay transparency compliance requirements or any HR issues, please contact Adare by calling 021 486 1420 or emailing info@adarehrm.ie to learn what services are available to support your business.