

# Monday Morning Dispatch

YOUR WEEKLY EMPLOYMENT LAW NEWSLETTER FROM CHADWICK LAWRENCE LLP

## Coming up this week...

- Sam & Nils discuss Clean Air Zone Charges and Disclosure Issues in Pregnancy Discrimination
- In our final video on fire and rehire, Daniel looks at the Government's consultation on whether significant changes to shift patterns should stay outside the new rules or be treated as a 'restricted variation'.
- In the news, we take a look at a case about balancing protected beliefs in the workplace.
- Don't miss our Flexible Working seminar this Thursday, register below!

## The Legal Alternative Podcast



### 29. Clean Air Zone Charges and Disclosure Issues in Pregnancy Discrimination

This week, Sam & Nils cover a practical issue affecting motorists in Bradford and a recent pregnancy discrimination case highlighting the risks employers face when managing sickness absence and flexible working requests during pregnancy.



## The Media Hub



### Flexible Working Case Update

In this case, we review a recent decision in the Employment Appeals Tribunal concerning the refusal of a flexible working request, which resulted in a claim of indirect sex discrimination. We consider the burden placed on the employer to succeed in a defence of objective justification.



# In the News

## National Minimum Wage Rises in 2026: Key Implications for Employers



While much of the current employment law news is focused on the reforms introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025, employers should not overlook the upcoming increases to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW).

Following draft regulations laid before Parliament, new rates will come into effect from **1<sup>st</sup> April 2026**, delivering another year of notable increases.

### **New Wage Rates from April 2026**

The National Living Wage for workers aged 21 and over will rise from £12.21 to **£12.71 per hour**, a 4.1% increase, while the rate for 18-20 year olds will increase by 8.5% to **£10.85 per hour**.

These continued uplifts are part of a longer-term trend of significant annual increases which are gradually reshaping pay structures across many sectors.

### **Implications for Employers**

For employers, a key issue is pay compression, where the gap narrows between employees paid at or near the minimum rate and those in more skilled or supervisory roles. A full-time worker earning the NLW will soon earn around £25,000 per year before tax, bringing their pay closer to the UK median salary of approximately £39,000.

This can create pressure from higher-paid employees seeking salary increases to maintain pay differentials, adding further strain to wage budgets.

Employers should therefore review their pay structures, payroll systems and compliance processes to ensure they remain aligned with the new rates and avoid inadvertently breaching NMW rules.

### **Ensuring Compliance**

NMW compliance can be more complex than simply dividing pay by hours worked. The rules differ depending on the type of work involved, such as salaried, time-based, output-based or unmeasured work.

Common areas where employers encounter difficulties include:

- Determining what counts as 'working time'
- Understanding which payments count towards NMW calculations
- Managing deductions or salary sacrifice arrangements without reducing pay below the threshold

Issues can also arise in relation to mandatory training, travel time, time off in lieu arrangements and certain absences, all of which must be considered carefully.

### **Enforcement and the Fair Work Agency**

Failure to comply with NMW rules can result in employers being required to repay arrears at current rates, alongside financial penalties. There is also the reputational risk of being publicly named by HMRC for breaches.

Looking ahead, the Government has announced plans to introduce a Fair Work Agency (FWA) from April 2026, which will bring together enforcement of several employment rights, including NMW, holiday pay and

statutory sick pay. The new body is expected to introduce a more coordinated and robust approach to enforcement.

As scrutiny increases, ensuring compliance with NMW and NLW requirements should remain a key priority for employers

## Upcoming Seminars & Events



We're pleased to announce the return of our Employment Law Seminars & Events Programme for 2026! For more information and to register, please click below:

### Managing Flexible Working Requests - Legal & Practical

19  
MAR

**TIME**  
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

**LOCATION**  
Chadwick Lawrence Huddersfield Office, HD1 1JS



### Employment Law & Recruitment Market Update *with Hays*

23  
APR

**TIME**  
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

**LOCATION**  
Hays Leeds Office, LS1 8EQ



## Mental Health Awareness Sessions



We're partnering with Tailored Learning Solutions to offer two day, in person, accredited Mental Health First Aid courses at our Wakefield office.

Accredited by MHFA England® and the Royal Society for Public Health, MHFAiders will improve knowledge and develop skills to support someone who may struggling and what to do with crisis support.



### MHFA 2 day (all day events) - £300 +VAT pp.

29/30  
APR

1/2  
JUL

30/1  
SEPT/OCT

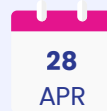
(Includes 3 year membership to the Associate for MFAiders, 3 years access to the MHFA Support App, Immediate wellbeing support via SHOUT charity, Quarterly Webinars and optional Level 3 OfQual Examination accredited with the Royal Society for Public Health)



## MHFA Refresher - £125 + VAT pp.

9:30 AM - 13:30 PM (Includes same benefits as above)

## Managing Neurodiversity in the Workplace - for Managers (CPD Certified 8hrs) - £250



1 Hour  
(9:30 AM)



1 Day  
Workshop

Both sessions need to be attended for the full CPD hours manager course, but the awareness can be attended as a stand alone event without the managers day (hope that makes sense). If you have learners just wanting the webinar this will be £50 pp. 1 hour CPD certificate but no access to benefits.

(Learners that attend both the webinar and managers course can access a free learning portal with additional resources for 3 years with new information being frequently, review slides, notes and videos at any time).

More info on MHFA and ND courses can be found here:

<https://www.tailoredlearningsolutions.co.uk/mental-health-first-aid>

## Contact Us



For questions, feedback, article ideas, or story contributions, email [boxhr@chadlaw.co.uk](mailto:boxhr@chadlaw.co.uk) and we'll be in touch.

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