

Schools' HR Bulletin

December 2025

Purpose of letter	For Information & Action
Target audience	All Governing Bodies All Head Teachers Teachers-in-Charge of Pupil Referral Units School Business Managers
Date of Edition	December 2025

Dear Colleagues,

The Schools HR Advisory Service would like to wish all of our Colleagues in Schools a very happy and restful festive period and we look forward to working with you in 2026.

Safer Recruitment Training – 22nd January 10am – 4pm

We will be running a Safer Recruitment training session via teams on Thursday 27th November 2025 at 10am. The training session is expected to last 6 hours, finishing at 4pm. I have attached a handout which provides a summary of the topics covered in the training.

If you wish to attend the training, please can you email schoolshradvisoryteam@lbbd.gov.uk; to confirm the number of staff members you wish to attend the training, along with their names and work contact details by Friday 16th January 2026.

Safer Recruitment Renewal Course

To streamline future training renewals, we will introduce a Safer Recruitment Renewal course. This course will be available to individuals who have previously completed the full Safer Recruitment Training and hold a valid certificate, provided their original training was completed within the recommended three-year renewal period. This renewal training will be shorter, more cost-effective, and will focus specifically on updates and changes to Safer Recruitment practices.

2026 NJC pay claim

The 2026 pay claim from the NJC unions has been received and the headline claim is for one year and seeks:

Barking & Dagenham

- *An increase of at least £3,000 or 10 per cent (whichever is greater) across all NJC spinal column points*
- *A minimum pay rate of £15 an hour for the NJC pay spine*
- *A two-hour reduction in the working week*
- *An increase of one day annual leave*
- *The ability of all school support staff to take a day of paid leave during term time*
- *The abolition of Level 1 Teaching Assistant role and instead all Level 1 role holders be moved onto Level 2*

However, in the event of a multi-year settlement being proposed, the unions would seek the following structure to a three-year agreement:

- *Year 1: £3,000 or 10 per cent (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points, alongside the introduction of a £15 minimum hourly rate*
- *Year 2: An increase of RPI + 3 per cent*
- *Year 3: An increase of RPI + 2 per cent*

The National Employers will consult councils to seek their views on the claim and will respond formally to the unions in due course”

Electronic and Workplace Balloting Consultation

The Government has launched a consultation on a draft code of practice to allow electronic, hybrid, and workplace balloting for statutory union ballots, as part of the Make Work Pay agenda.

These changes are not dependent on the Employment Rights Bill but will be introduced through secondary legislation under section 54 of the Employment Relations Act 2004. The aim is to improve accessibility, strengthen democratic mandates by increasing participation, and reduce administrative costs for trade unions.

Currently, all statutory union ballots (including for industrial action and union elections) must be conducted by post under TULRCA 1992.

The proposals would introduce three new voting methods: electronic balloting, hybrid (electronic and workplace) balloting, and workplace balloting. Due to potential risks, robust safeguards are proposed to ensure legality, safety, security, ballot secrecy, and fairness.

The consultation closes on 28th January 2026. While the original plan was for the changes to take effect by April 2026, implementation is now likely to be later in 2026. This is described as a first step, with further expansion of electronic voting methods planned in collaboration with stakeholders throughout 2026 and beyond.

Please see [here](#) for further information.

Launch of the Maximising Value for Pupils Programme which includes workforce planning material & request for HR volunteers for user research

Please see below some DfE offers that may be of use or interest to you in supporting your school.

- The DfE's Maximising Value for Pupils programme is now live [Maximising value for pupils: guidance for schools and trusts - GOV.UK](#) along with the policy statement [Maximising value for pupils - GOV.UK](#).

This new programme reflects the shared ambition across government, schools, and trusts to ensure every pound in the school system delivers the greatest possible value for children and young people. While the programme therefore focuses on tackling these systemic challenges while providing practical support to help schools plan and deploy resources most effectively.

Workforce deployment – sharing best practice and addressing excessive costs in agency supply; (here is a quick link [Strategic workforce planning for schools and trusts - GOV.UK](#))

- The Department for Education (DfE) is developing an online service to bring together trusted DfE tools, guidance, and services in one place, helping schools save time. As part of this initiative, the DfE is conducting user research to understand your experiences and gather feedback on new designs. Your input will help ensure the service meets the needs of schools.

They are looking to speak to School Business Managers, School Leaders, and Trust Leaders whose role involves Finance, Funding, Procurement, Estates, completing statutory returns, or HR.

What does taking part involve?

- User research sessions will be held between December 2025 to February 2026, at a date and time convenient to you.
- You can choose what type of research you get involved in, whether it's completing a survey, or talking to us in an online session.

[Fill in this form](#) to register your interest in taking part, or please pass this request on to anyone who may be interested.

Managing specific infectious diseases

We are recirculating this guidance that sets out how to manage infectious diseases within schools. It provides advice on prevention, control, and exclusion requirements for a wide range of conditions.

The document should be used by all relevant personnel to support consistent and effective infection control procedures.

[Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z – GOV.UK](#)

Yours sincerely,



Schools HR Advisory Service

schoolshradvisoryteam@lbbd.gov.uk

Feedback on the Service can be submitted regarding the Schools HR Advisory Service via the following link: [Feedback Survey 2025](#)

ALL Schools