

Schools' HR Bulletin November 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	November 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the November Edition of the Schools HR Bulletin; we hope that you had a restful break over the half term and are prepared for the second half of the Winter term. As November is Men's Mental Health Month, we have included a section on relevant support and services that can be accessed for free.

2025 Flu Vaccination Programme

Stop the spread this winter

The flu virus kills almost 11,000 people and hospitalises tens of thousands more in England in an average year, so it is more important than ever to get your flu jab to help stop the spread.

If you would like Occupational Health to hold a flu vaccine clinic at your school*, please contact Occupationalhealth@lbbd.gov.uk to arrange a date.

*Please note there will be a £195 cost when holding clinics at the school.

Alternatively, you and your staff can attend any of the drop-in clinics being held across council buildings in November. The next available dates are:

- Monday 10th November-9:30am-4:30pm-Barking Town Hall-George Brooker room

Teachers' Pay 2026/27/28

The NEOST board has now met and submitted our evidence to the School Teachers Review Body. You can [read that report, along with information on the process and next steps](#).

Governments written evidence to the STRB

The government has produced written evidence to the STRB for the 2026 teacher pay review round, which was published yesterday following a delay from 20 October.

The below are key points from the written evidence submitted:

Pay Award Weighting across 3 years (Paragraph 137):

The government proposes a 6.5% pay award spread over 2026/27, 2027/28, and 2028/29, with higher weighting in the latter years. This approach aims to ease affordability pressures in 2026/27 following significant uplifts in 2024/25 and 2025/26, and to allow schools more time to plan operational and staffing changes.

Affordability and SCTN (Paragraph 151):

The Schools Costs Technical Note (SCTN) is expected in early 2026 (potentially January). The government's analysis i.e. 'the overall pattern suggests that affordability will be limited across the SR period, and especially in 2026/27, when affordability will be tightly constrained' - aligns with NEOST's evidence, which urges the STRB to consider the sustainability of pay recommendations within existing budgets, especially in the absence of new funding, while balancing recruitment and retention pressures.

The full report is included as an attachment.

Employment Service Passport (NHS and Local Government London Agreement)

The above agreement came into effect from the 1st April 2025, to enable employees to move jobs between the NHS and Local Government Organisations in London. The NHS and Local Government London have agreed that any job offer will confirm that the employee's Continuous/Reckonable Service will be preserved and processes will be set up to ensure this agreement is followed.

Local arrangements that refer to Continuity of Service or reckonable service for Contractual Entitlements will recognise this agreement and consider any continuous/reckonable service gained at another Party.

This agreement affects eligibility and calculation of the following benefits:

- Contractual Annual Leave beyond the Statutory Annual Leave
- Occupational Sick Pay
- Occupational Maternity Pay
- Occupational Shared Parental Leave Pay

However, please be aware that this agreement **does not extend** to preserving Continuous Service for Contractual Severance Pay, Pension, or Redundancy Pay calculations (whether Contractual or Statutory).

Please find attached the updated New Starter Pack, which has been revised to reflect the Employment Service Passport agreement between the NHS and Local Government.

Review of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)

The Department for Education will host a webinar for teachers and leaders across schools, early years, and further education to discuss the ongoing review of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). The review, announced in January 2025, aims to ensure NPQs remain a high-quality CPD offer that supports school improvement and pupil outcomes.

The session will outline the purpose and progress of the review and explain how educators can get involved. Questions for the live event can be submitted by emailing npq.insights@education.gov.uk with the subject line 'Live Webinar Question' by 3pm on Tuesday 11 November 2025. Read more about the NPQ review [here](#).

C2C Travel to Work Scheme

Save Big on Your Commute with the c2c Travel to Work Scheme

We're thrilled to announce a new partnership between c2c Rail and Barking and Dagenham Council, offering exclusive travel perks just for council employees!

Why Join the Scheme?

- 10% Discount on c2c season tickets — perfect for your daily commute
- Automatic Entry into prize draws — simply for being a member
- Support Sustainable Travel — reduce your carbon footprint while saving money

"We are pleased to invite employees of Barking and Dagenham Council to join the Travel to Work scheme. By working with the council and our wider network of partners, we aim to promote sustainable travel and support employees who regularly use c2c for their commute." c2c Rail

How to Join:

1. Visit the c2c website: <https://www.c2c-online.co.uk/tickets-and-fares/apply-for-c2c-travel-to-work-scheme/>
2. Follow the instructions to register for the scheme
3. Use your LBBD email address during sign-up — this is required for verification

Reminder of Training

The Schools HR Advisory Service offers a package of training at a discounted cost for Schools who buy into our Service. If you wish to book any training. Please register your interest [here](#).

We would like to recommend a selection of courses that we believe will be particularly valuable considering the anticipated organisational changes, current levels of sickness absence, and the ongoing statutory responsibilities around Keeping Children Safe.

These include:

- **Organisational Change**
- **Safer Recruitment Selection & Safeguarding**
- **Sickness Absence Management**

These courses are designed to equip Leaders and Managers with the skills and confidence to:

- Navigate change effectively and strategically
- Maintain safe and compliant recruitment practices
- Manage absence with confidence, ensuring legal and procedural compliance

The full list of courses are below:

- Capability (Teachers Or Support Staff)
- Disciplinary Investigation
- Grievance
- Safer Recruitment, Selection & Safeguarding
- Handling Necessary Conversations
- Organisational Change
- Support Staff Appraisals
- Job Design and Job Evaluation
- Probation
- Sickness Absence Management
- How to Carry Out Stage 1 Informal Meetings
- Bullying and Harassment
- Menopause
- Prevention of Sexual Harassment
- Governors Disciplinary, Grievance and Sickness Hearings
- HR Workshops (As and when required)

Please note we will require at least 48 hours' notice should you wish to cancel attending a training session, if you do not cancel nor give the appropriate notice you may still be charged for the course (should charges apply).

Stage One Informal Sickness Meetings

In order to use the Service's time more effectively, we no longer routinely support Stage One sickness absence meetings unless, following consultation, we consider the case to be complex and requiring HR involvement. If you have concerns about a particular case, please contact schoolshradvisoryteam@lbdd.gov.uk and we will be happy to discuss next steps.

The *How to Carry Out Stage 1 Informal Meetings* training mentioned above has been specifically developed to support Schools in managing and conducting Stage 1 Informal Meetings. It aims to build confidence and consistency in how these meetings are carried out, ensuring they are handled effectively, fairly, and in line with best practice.

This course will be free of charge, and we have allocated 1.5 hours for the training to allow for questions as well.

If you are interested please click on the link to register your interest [here](#).

Employment Rights Bill – Key Legislation Updates

Just a reminder that the UK Government has introduced significant changes to employment legislation through the Employment Rights Bill, which is expected to receive Royal Assent before the end of 2025. These changes will impact how schools and other employers manage employment rights, workplace policies, and staff relations.

Key Changes to Be Aware Of

1. Day-One Rights for Unfair Dismissal

Employees will gain the right to bring ordinary unfair dismissal claims from day one of employment, removing the previous two-year qualifying period.

2. Ban on Restrictive NDAs

Confidentiality clauses that prevent staff from disclosing experiences of harassment or discrimination will be rendered void. This promotes transparency and supports a safer working environment.

3. Guaranteed Hours for Zero-Hour Contracts

Employers will be required to offer guaranteed hours after a qualifying period (likely 12 weeks), improving job security for casual staff.

4. Duty to Prevent Harassment

A new legal duty will require employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent workplace harassment, including from third parties such as parents, visitors, or contractors.

Next Steps

- We will issue updated guidance and templates once Royal Assent is confirmed.
- Training sessions will be scheduled for managers and school leaders in **December 2025**.

Please direct any questions to schoolshradvisoryteam@lbbd.gov.uk

LGA Advisory Bulletin - Employment Law Update 738 & 739

Attached to this Bulletin are the latest LGA Advisory Bulletins and announcements on changes to employment legislation, as summarised below:

Advisory Bulletin 738

- Employment Rights Bill Update
- Employment Status: Direct Payments
- Case in Brief: Data Protection – Oral Disclosure
- Failure to Prevent Fraud Offence
- Neonatal Leave: Employer Technical Guidance
- Employment Law Timetable

Advisory Bulletin 739

- Employment Rights Bill Update
- Adult Social Care Negotiating Body: Consultation
- Adult Social Care Negotiating Body Consultation: LGA Webinar
- Make Work Pay Consultations launched

Barking & Dagenham

- **Local Government Reorganisation: Workforce Issues Guidance**
- **Public Office (Accountability) Bill**
- **Employment Law Timetable**

Recent Case Law Highlights

Race Discrimination:

An English Care Worker won a racial discrimination and harassment claim after managers spoke Polish during a meeting about her performance. The tribunal found this made her feel excluded, even if unintentionally.

Casual use of Polish outside such meetings was not considered harassment. The case highlights the need for language sensitivity in diverse workplaces. Further information can be found [here](#).

Gender Reassignment Discrimination:

A transgender woman was lawfully excluded from a female pool competition after the sport's policy changed to require sex-based eligibility. The court ruled this was a proportionate way to ensure fair play. Her gender recognition certificate did not affect the outcome, as under the Equality Act, she was considered biologically male and treated the same as any man without gender reassignment. Further information can be found [here](#).

Unfair Dismissal:

Miss Lanuszka was unfairly dismissed after her employer used spyware to monitor personal use of her work computer. The tribunal found no clear policy against such use, procedural flaws in the dismissal process, and concluded the real reason was to avoid her reaching two years' service. There was no proper investigation or opportunity for her to respond. Further information can be found [here](#).

Men's Mental Health Month

Men's Mental Health Month is celebrated annually in November to raise awareness and encourage men to discuss their mental health openly. It highlights the unique mental health challenges men face, the stigma surrounding these issues, and promotes seeking support, healthier coping strategies, and early detection of problems like depression and suicide.

As part of Men's Mental Health Month, we would like to remind Schools of some of the great support that is offered that is free to access at any time.

NHS Talking Therapies

The NHS talking therapies service offers free counselling and cognitive behaviour therapy treatment. People can self-refer, without consulting with their GP, if they are not comfortable. Please click [here](#) to locate a service a nearby service.

Mind

Mind is a UK-based charity that provides mental health information and support services, campaigns for better mental health policies, and works to reduce mental health stigma. They offer a variety of support, including an Infoline and online advice. To find out more about the support and services available please click [here](#).

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Barking & Dagenham

An EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health, and general wellbeing. Our EAP service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues.

The contact details for Health Assured are:

Website link: [Wisdom \(healthassured.org\)](https://www.healthassured.org)
Telephone number: 0800 028 0199
Phone App: *Wisdom: Learn, Grow, Thrive*
(employee code: MHA246004)

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](#)