



Employment Law Update



Showcasing Local
Government Careers



EMC Leadership
Development



National Developments
including Pay

SHOWCASING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAREERS AT THE DMU CAREERS FAIR

East Midlands Councils showcased local government careers at the De Montfort University Careers Fair this month as part of ongoing support for Leicestershire Districts and Rutland Recruitment Campaign and the wider national drive to promote careers in local government. EMC were joined by colleagues from Melton Borough Council, Harborough District Council and Blaby District Council, who helped showcase the wide range of rewarding and meaningful roles available across local government.

The Careers Fair provided a great opportunity to speak directly with students and graduates about the diversity of work within councils, the chance to make a tangible difference in local communities, and the variety of pathways available to enter the sector. A big thank you to our district and borough council partners for their enthusiasm and support throughout the event. Click on the link for key takeaways from the experience:

[READ MORE](#)

SICKNESS ABSENCE SURVEY

Each year, EMC benchmarks sickness absence levels across the region and many of you have told us how useful this information is. It also provides you with an opportunity to shape EMC's support on wellbeing and attendance, and inform any regional joint working. We would be grateful if you could provide us with information on your organisation's sickness absence rate for 2024/25 using the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/Regg9pp736>

Please would you respond by **Friday 14th November** so that we can share the results with our Regional Joint Council at their next meeting. A compiled report with the results will be shared with all respondents.

PROJECTS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

During October EMC has supported authorities with:

- Psychometric testing
- Restructuring
- Grievance appeal

Contact Sam or Lisa if you would like any support in your organisation.

CONTACT SAM

CONTACT LISA



LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As you will be aware, we have been developing a range of programmes which have been put together based on our experience of development needs in the lead up to LGR within Northamptonshire, as well as reflecting recent requests for support – both for teams and individuals. These include skills-based programmes and development that will lead to qualifications.

To support the current and future leadership and management needs in a quality, relevant and cost effective way we have provided a range of accredited leadership and management and coaching and mentoring courses designed with the uncertain, challenging and ever changing local government climate in mind.

We will be sending out more detailed information next week including dates for the programmes which have been arranged commencing in February 2026.

You can view the full details on each programme here:

[READ MORE](#)

EAST MIDLANDS CHALLENGE 2026 – VENUE CONFIRMED!

We are pleased to confirm that the venue for the East Midlands Challenge on 29th April 2026 will be Leicester Racecourse in Oadby, Leicestershire. This venue has been popular with participants, with plenty of parking available on site.

Already, a number of councils have booked a place for a team at the Challenge and if you'd like to secure a place, all you need to do at this stage is to register that your organisation will take part. Councils that have participated in the event in the past and seen the benefits, are enthusiastic about the event and the positive impact it has had on the confidence, personal and career development of employees that have experienced the day.

The Challenge offers a fantastic opportunity for aspiring leaders to gain exposure to issues outside of their normal work, giving them a taste of what senior management is really like and testing their skills in running a Unitary council.

Teams will work with neighbouring stakeholders and partners to deliver a new strategy for their organisation. They'll have to identify which areas to prioritise, deal with politically sensitive issues and maintain customer focus when determining how to provide the public with the best services possible despite limited resources. Taking on the role of senior management, teams of 6 people are required to prioritise a series of challenges, gaining exposure to issues outside of their normal work and expanding their skill set in the process.

Who can enter? The Challenge has been developed so that teams of 6 people from the public, private and voluntary sectors can compete against each other on a level playing field so please feel free to share with other partner organisations, e.g., Health and Emergency Services in particular, who you think may enjoy and benefit from the challenge.

Cost We are offering an early bird rate of £1850 + VAT to EMC members only if booked before 16th January 2026. The price will then increase to £2250 + VAT until the closing date on 25th March 2026.

[READ MORE](#)



IN DEEP WITH DARREN

We are looking forward to seeing Darren at our Employment Law Update event next Wednesday 5th November. In the meantime, we have set out below a summary of some of the recent developments in employment law.

EMPLOYMENT LAW ROUND-UP CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION RULES

The Government has published a further Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules. The changes include new visa requirements for visitors who are nationals of Botswana and Palestine, effective from 14th October and 11th November respectively.

From 8 January 2026, the English language requirement will increase from B1 level to B2 level (A-Level standard) for those applying for an initial grant of leave as a main applicant on the Skilled Worker, High Potential Individual and Scale-up visa routes. Those who have already obtained a permission based on the B1 level requirement will continue to be subject to the lower level when applying for an extension on the same route. The changes to the English language requirement do not currently apply to applications for indefinite leave to remain.

From 1 January 2027, new applicants on the Graduate route will be granted a visa for 18 months only, reduced from two years (PhD graduates will continue to be granted a three-year visa).

The Government has also announced that the Immigration Skills Charge will increase by 32% on 16 December 2025, subject to Parliamentary approval. This Charge is payable by the employer when sponsoring a migrant worker under the Skilled Worker or Senior or Specialist Worker (Global Business Mobility) visa routes unless an exemption applies. The charges will be:

- small companies or charities — £480 for periods of employment up to 12 months, plus £240 for each subsequent six-month period stated on the Certificate of Sponsorship

large companies — £1320 for periods of employment up to 12 months, plus £660 for each subsequent six-month period stated on the Certificate of Sponsorship

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT LAW CHANGES

This month the Government launched consultation on proposals relating to the following:-

- Duty to inform workers of a right to join a union, which closes on 18th December 2025 [Make Work Pay: duty to inform workers of right to join a union - GOV.UK](#)
- Enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers, which closes on 15th January 2026 [Make Work Pay: enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers - GOV.UK](#)
- Leave for bereavement, including pregnancy loss, which also closes on 15th January 2026 [Make Work Pay: leave for bereavement including pregnancy loss - GOV.UK](#)



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

NATIONAL PAY DEVELOPMENTS

Teachers in Residential Establishments

The most recent circular JESC No. 233 issued was issued on 21 October 2025. Under the terms of the JNCTRE Agreement, all allowances (including Instructors scales) other than the Sleeping in Duty Allowance have been increased in line with the STPCD (England) and STPC(W)D (Wales) allowances and should, therefore, be increased by 4 per cent in England and 4 per cent in Wales with effect from 1 September 2025. The Sleeping in Duty Allowance should be increased by 3.2 per cent from 1 April 2025, in line with the headline percentage pay increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services for 2025-26. The Circular is available at the link below.

READ MORE

INCREASE TO CARETAKERS' LETTING FEES FOR 2025

The East Midlands Regional Joint Council met on 9th October 2025 and reviewed the Caretakers' Letting Fees. The Joint Council agreed a 3.2% uplift to the fees with effect from 1st April 2025. A copy of the revised document setting out the fees is available at the link below.

READ MORE

INCREASE TO VOLUNTARY REAL LIVING WAGE

The Living Wage Foundation has announced new rates for 2025–26, which will see an increase of 6.7% for workers outside of London, resulting in a new rate of £13.45 per hour for UK. Employers that have chosen to adopt the Real Living Wage will need to implement this new rate by 1st May 2026 at the latest.

This compares to the compulsory National Living Wage hourly rates applicable to workers aged 21 and over of £12.21 and the National Minimum Wage of £10 for those 18-20 and £7.55 for those under 18. In local government, the current minimum rate of pay is £12.65, and this will increase to £12.85 when spinal column point 2 is removed from the national pay spine on 1st April 2026 as part of this year's national pay award.

We are expecting the new rates for the National Living Wage/Minimum Wage to be announced as part of the Chancellor's budget at the end of October. The Government has instructed the Low Pay Commission to remove the age bandings and take account of the cost of living within its review of the rates.



NATIONAL RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN UPDATE

EMC hosted a meeting earlier this week to provide an opportunity for councils in the region to hear how their views have been taken on board with this year's national recruitment campaign.

New videos are being added to the resources reflecting the occupations and candidate demographic that had been identified. The resources in the toolkit will be easier to access and download, using a weblink.

The resources are scheduled to be launched next week, in advance of the advertising campaign starting in January 2026. EMC will make sure that we notify as soon as the resources become available.

CONSULTATION ON ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL NEGOTIATING BODY AND FAIR PAY AGREEMENTS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

EMC hosted a meeting on 28th October to enable councils to learn more about and discuss the implications of proposals to introduce a new national negotiating body for adult social care and fair pay agreements. The aim of the meeting was to help councils prepare their responses to the Government's consultation exercise, which closes on 16th January 2026.

Participants from all of the county and unitary councils attended – including those working in adult social care and HR/workforce professions, along with some colleagues from district/borough councils. The meeting provided an opportunity to meet with representatives from the Department of Health & Social Care and to hear from a senior workforce lead from the LGA on key implications for the sector.

Initial comments and concerns expressed at the meeting were summarised by EMC and fed back to DHSC and the LGA. EMC will arrange a follow-up meeting in December. For further information, email Sam.

The consultation document can be accessed here: [FAIR PAY AGREEMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT](#)

CONTACT SAM