East Midlands Councils

HR BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2026

East Midlands Challenge – 7th Oct 2027

Darren Newman's advice on a hot legal topic to follow

Celebrating Leadership & Coaching Programmes

National Developments

EAST MIDLANDS CHALLENGE 2027

Back by popular demand, we are delighted to announce that East Midlands Councils will host the East Midlands Challenge event on 7th October 2027 at Leicester Racecourse.

If you would 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 previous events have 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, give them a taste of what senior management is like and test their skills in running a Unitary council.

Teams made up of a maximum of 5 people ***(previously the requirement was 6 people per team)*** take on the role of a senior management team and 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. They will address a series of challenges and expand their skill set in the process.

Who can enter?: The Challenge has been developed so that teams from 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 experience.

Cost: We are offering an early bird rate of £1950 + VAT per team to EMC members that book a place before 28th May 2027. The price then increases to £2350 + VAT until the closing date on 3rd September 2027.

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PROJECTS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In October EMC has supported authorities with:

- Restructuring Support
- Grievance investigations
- Mediation

Contact Sam or Lisa to discuss how EMC can support your organisation.

CONTACT SAM CONTACT LISA

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LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

CELEBRATING POSITIVE FEEDBACK ACROSS OUR LEADERSHIP AND COACHING PROGRAMMES

Over the past few months, East Midlands Councils has worked in partnership with Challenge Consulting to deliver a range of accredited ILM Leadership and Management and ILM Coaching and Mentoring programmes. These courses have been offered across the region, with several local authorities also choosing to deliver them in-house to support the development of their own colleagues.

Delegates reported that the programmes provided practical tools and approaches that could be applied immediately in the workplace. Many participants highlighted improvements in their confidence, leadership capability and management practice as a direct result of the learning experience.

We have received excellent feedback about the trainers who were described as knowledgeable, engaging, supportive and skilled at creating inclusive learning environments where delegates felt comfortable contributing to discussions and sharing experiences.

Overall, the evaluations demonstrated the continued success of our leadership development offer. Below are some comments received from delegates:

- "Course is very informative and have been recommending others to enrol."
- "Very relevant - learning lots!"
- "Excellent trainer. Very personable and engaging."
- "Well-paced, knowledgeable. Pleasant style."
- "Good group of delegates who were all happy to get involved in discussions."
- "Maintained focus and interest throughout."

One authority has experienced significant change at both political and officer leadership levels, including several statutory officer positions. Following a review of their management structure we were contacted for assistance in sourcing high-quality leadership and management development opportunities for their workforce. Through Challenge, we were able to offer a range of ILM programmes which enabled 36 colleagues from across the authority to successfully complete the qualification.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with colleagues consistently highlighting the quality of the learning experience and the practical application of the skills they gained.

They are already seeing tangible benefits across the authority. Participants report increased confidence in their leadership abilities, greater self-awareness, and a stronger understanding of how to lead teams effectively through change. Many are already applying their learning in the workplace, contributing positively to both team performance and organisational objectives.

We are currently gathering expressions of interest from local authorities to help us assess demand for priority learning and development needs going forward.

More information on our course offers can be found here: Learning and Development Programmes. If you have any questions please contact lisa.butterfill@emcouncils.gov.uk or lisa.bushell@emcouncils.gov.uk

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IN DEEP WITH DARREN

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Our employment law update article from Darren Newman will be circulated separately this month.

In the meantime, we wanted to make sure that you are aware the opportunity to hear from Darren and put forward any questions you have for him at the Employment Law Update Seminar in which takes place on:

🗓️ Tuesday 3rd November 2026
🕙 10:00am - 12:30pm
💻 MS Teams

💷 £80 + VAT per person for EMC Members
👥 £90 + VAT per person for Associate Members
🌐 £110 + VAT per person for Non-Members

🏷️ Buy One, Get One Half Price for EMC Members and Associate Members Only ⭐

If you would like to book a place,please email mila.pereira@emcouncils.gov.uk

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NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

EAST MIDLANDS PAY CONSULTATION BRIEFING FOR 2027 NATIONAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS – 8TH DECEMBER 2026, 2PM-4PM, MS TEAMS

East Midlands Councils will be hosting a regional pay consultation briefing on Tuesday 8th December 2026 from 2pm-4.00pm. The briefing is an opportunity to meet with the national negotiators to discuss claims received from employees' representatives and to inform the National Employers' response. It will take place virtually to assist attendance.

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CRAFT PAY – UPDATED OFFER

At the National Employers AGM on 15th Oct, agreement was made to make updated full and final pay offer to the JNC Craft unions. Full details of the offer can be found on our website.

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ANNOUNCEMENT ON NATIONAL LIVING WAGE RATE FROM APRIL 2027

As part of this week's Budget Announcement, the Chancellor confirmed the National Living Wage rate (NLW) will increase from 1st April 2027 from £12.71 to £13.21 per hour, a 3.9% increase. The bottom pay point in local government is currently £13.28 per hour, so just 7p above the legal minimum level until any national pay agreement is reached for 2027.

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VOLUNTARY LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION RATE INCREASE ANNOUNCED 2027

On 15th October 2026 the Living Wage Foundation announced an increase to its rate. The new rate is £14.10 per hour outside of London. Those employers who choose to apply the rate will have until May 2027 in which to make the increase.

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JNC YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS PAY AGREEMENT

Agreement has today (30th Oct) been reached on the 2026 pay award for youth and community workers ('Pink Book') employees.

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3RD-PARTY HARASSMENT LIABILITY & DUTY TO TAKE ALL REASONABLE STEPS

Employment Rights Act 2025 measures that strengthen protection from harassment come into effect today (30th October 2026). Under the Act employers are liable for third-party harassment of workers in the course of their employment, where the employer has failed to take all reasonable steps to prevent this. This provision covers all types of harassment under the Equality Act 2010.

The Act also amends the sexual harassment prevention duty, which was introduced on 26 October 2024, by adding the word "all", so that employers now have a duty to take **all** reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers in the course of their employment. Further regulations will specify what steps are to be regarded as reasonable - these Regulations are not expected until 2027). In the meantime, it may be useful to refer to the existing guidance from the Equality & Human Rights Commission on what counts as "reasonable steps". A link to this is provided below.

EMC's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) network provides an opportunity to discuss and share information and approaches to EDI issues. The next virtual network meeting is on **3rd December 10.00-11.30**. Contact suzanne.boultby@emcouncils.gov.uk for further details.

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GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON ENHANCED DISMISSAL PROTECTIONS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN & NEW MOTHERS

On 22nd October, the Government published its response to consultation on enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers (see link below). The response sets out how the protection will operate, introducing the requirement for dismissals to be a proportionate way of achieving a legitimate aim. The Government intends the new protections to come into effect in October 2027.

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REVISED TIMELINE ON EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT & CHANGES THIS MONTH

The Government's timeline for implementing the Employment Rights Act 2025 was updated on 22nd October. The revised timeline can be accessed through the link below. Provisions implemented this month include –

- From 1st October: the time limit for bringing an ET claim was increased from 3 to 6 months.
- From today (30th October): new requirements relating to workplace sexual harassment (see article above), new trade union rights and representation measures. ACAS published an updated Code of Practice on time off for union duties and activities: ACAS Code of Practice.

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