

BENNETT'S BULLETIN



Informing,
Supporting, and
Growing Together



Dear colleagues and partners,



As we step into the final weeks of 2025, I'm delighted to present the second edition of Bennett's Bulletin. This newsletter is designed to keep you informed about the fast-changing employment landscape in Tameside and the wider North West, highlight the key takeaways from the Autumn Budget and Employment Legislation, and share some exciting updates from our own team.

Merry
Christmas

At Bennett Staff, our commitment remains to empower local businesses and job seekers with timely, practical information, appropriate and relevant job opportunities and excitement and optimism for 2026.

Employment in Tameside and the North West: Confidence & Opportunity

The North West continues to ride a wave of employer confidence, mirroring trends seen nationwide. According to the latest figures from the Recruitment & Employment Confederation, optimism among businesses in our region is at its highest in over two years. Cities like Manchester, Liverpool, and Preston – and of course, our own Tameside – are seeing a boost in recruitment activity, with firms eager to invest in local talent.

This resurgence is more than just numbers; it's a testament to the adaptability and resilience of our workforce. Whether you're actively hiring or considering a strategic career move, now is an excellent time to engage with recruitment specialists and explore new opportunities. The North West's reputation for enterprise and collaboration continues to make it a pivotal player in shaping the UK's economic future.



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Autumn Budget 2025: Key Messages for Employers

In the recent Autumn Budget 2025 speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, announced several measures that will directly affect employers and business stakeholders in our region. Here are the highlights:

- **Tax Changes:** New income tax rates for property, savings, and dividends effective from April 2026/2027. Property income tax rates will be set separately, with basic, higher, and additional rates adjusted. Dividend rates for individuals will increase by 2%, while savings rates will also see a rise.
- **Salary Sacrifice Reform:** From April 2029, salary sacrifice for pension contributions will be capped at £2,000 per year before attracting National Insurance charges, bringing additional contributions in line with standard workplace pensions.
- **Shift Payments and Benefits:** Payments for cancelled or altered shifts are to be treated as taxable earnings, with draft legislation published to support real-time reporting of benefits in kind from April 2027.
- **Homeworking Expenses:** New exemptions for homeworking equipment, eye tests, and flu vaccinations aim to simplify rules and reduce admin for employers from April 2026.
- **Company Car Tax:** Changes to Employee Car Ownership Schemes will come into effect from April 2030, giving the sector time to adapt.
- **Administration:** Corporation Tax late filing penalties are set to double from April 2026. Digital communication will become the norm for HMRC from spring 2026, with opt-out options for those preferring paper correspondence.
- **Business Systems Integration:** A forthcoming call for evidence will seek input on automating the transfer of sales and purchase data into accounting software, supporting digital transformation for businesses.

What it means for our region!

The Autumn Budget brings both challenges and opportunities for employers across Tameside and the North West. Adjustments to tax rates and compliance requirements may require a review of your payroll and accounting practices, while enhanced support for veterans and homeworking reflect the evolving nature of work.

We recommend staying up to date with official guidance and consulting with your professional advisors to ensure smooth implementation of these changes. Bennett Staff is here to support you through the transition – please reach out if you have questions or need specific recruitment advice.



Spotlight on Employment Legislation Changes

Whilst the Government continues to finalise technical details, changes are now confirmed and will begin taking effect from April 2026.

• Fair Work Agency

The Fair Work Agency will act as a central hub for employment rights enforcement, designed to streamline support for both workers and employers. The agency will have the ability to inspect workplaces and require employers to evidence compliance with employment law and issue penalties if it is found that employers have underpaid workers.

What to do?

- Take proactive steps to ensure you're fully compliant with employment laws by ensuring you are using the latest versions of contracts, handbooks, and policies provided by your own HR.
- Review your payroll systems to confirm that all workers are being paid correctly (including holiday pay, minimum wage, overtime, etc.).
- Ensure accurate record-keeping for wages, hours worked, holiday entitlements, and contracts, in case evidence is requested.

• Sexual Harassment

Regulations will define what actions are considered “reasonable steps” for employers to take to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

What to do?

- Stay alert for further updates regarding your legal obligations ahead of this change coming into effect in 2027.

National Minimum Wage & National Living Wage

EFFECTIVE April 2026	NMW rate from April 2026	Increase (£)	Increase (%)
National Living Wage (21 and over)	£12.71	50p	4.1
18–20-Year-Old Rate	£10.85	85p	8.5
16–17-Year-Old Rate	£8.00	45p	6
Apprentice Rate	£8.00	45p	6
Accommodation Offset	£11.10	44p	4.1



• Statutory Sick Pay (Currently being lobbied in the Houses of Parliament)

Statutory Sick Pay will be available from the first day of sickness, rather than from day four, and from the very start of employment. The Lower Earnings Limit will be removed, meaning all eligible employees, regardless of their earnings, will qualify for SSP. SSP will be paid at 80% of an employee’s normal weekly earnings, or the current statutory rate - whichever is lower.

What to do?

- Check your employment contracts and handbooks (if they reference SSP terms) to ensure they align with the new legislation.
- Check payroll systems are configured to calculate SSP at 80% of normal weekly earnings (or the flat rate, whichever is lower).
- Consider strengthening your sickness absence policy by introducing return to work meetings after all absences and including absence trigger points (e.g. 3 separate absences in 6 months) to prompt formal reviews or meetings.

“We will keep you updated”



Exciting News from the Bennett's Team

Our Newly Refurbished Offices



We're thrilled to give you a 'sneaky peak' into our newly refurbished offices, designed to provide a modern, welcoming environment for staff and visitors alike.

The upgrades include refreshed meeting spaces, improved accessibility, and enhanced technology to support both our recruitment operations and candidate/client consultations. These improvements reflect our commitment to creating a positive workplace where our team, our candidates and our clients can thrive.

We look forward to meeting you soon – whether for a meeting, a consultation, or simply a chat over a cup of tea.

As we look ahead to a busy and promising 2026, I want to thank all our customers and candidates for your continued trust and collaboration.

The employment market in the North West is full of opportunity, and together we can seize the momentum for shared success. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your feedback, questions, or ideas – your engagement helps us serve you better.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



Meet Our Newest Team Member: Olivia Millard


Please join us in welcoming Olivia Millard to the Bennett Staff team. Olivia joined us in November 2025 as an Apprentice Administrator and is embarking on her Level 2 Customer Service Apprenticeship at Tameside College.

Her background in retail and hospitality brings valuable experience in customer care and problem-solving, making her a fantastic addition to our client-focused team.

Olivia is committed to delivering high-quality work and is eager to make a positive impact on both our team and the wider organisation. When she's not at work, she enjoys exploring new destinations on holiday and spending time with family and friends. We're excited to support her as she builds her career in recruitment and look forward to seeing her grow within Bennett Staff.



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