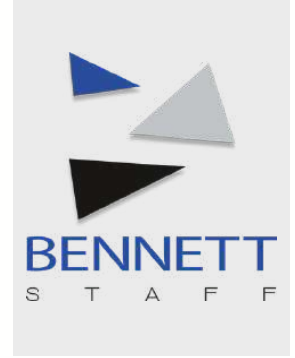


# BENNETT'S BULLETIN



Informing,  
Supporting, and  
Growing Together



## Welcome from the MD

Dear colleagues, clients and partners,  
Welcome to the second edition of Bennett's Bulletin. As we move further into 2026, the employment landscape continues to evolve at pace. This edition focuses on what matters most right now - the recent changes to minimum wage, confirmed updates to statutory sick pay, and wider employment rights reforms, alongside what we're seeing on the ground here in Tameside and the wider North West. At Bennett Staff, our aim remains simple: to keep you informed, supported, and ready to grow - whether you're hiring, job hunting, or planning your next move. There's a real sense of momentum locally, and with change comes opportunity. Let's take a closer look.

## Employment in Tameside and the North West: A Market in Motion

Here in Tameside and across Greater Manchester, we're continuing to see a steady and encouraging level of hiring activity.

Sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, administration, and customer service remain particularly active, with many businesses looking to strengthen their teams. We're also seeing increased demand for flexible and temporary staffing solutions as employers adapt to rising costs and changing legislation.

### For local employers, this means:

- Acting quickly when strong candidates become available
- Offering competitive pay and clear benefits
- Focusing on retention as much as recruitment

### For job seekers, it's a positive picture:

- More opportunities across a range of sectors
- Increased bargaining power, particularly in high-demand roles
- A chance to explore new directions or upskill

Tameside continues to show resilience and strength - and we're proud to support our local community every day.

# Minimum Wage Changes: What You Need to Know

As of April 2026, new National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) rates are now in effect.

These increases are a positive step for workers but understandably bring added considerations for businesses.

## For employers:

- Increased payroll costs
- The need to review pay structures across teams
- Potential knock-on effects on overtime and salary bands

## For employees:

- Improved earnings
- Greater consistency and fairness

## What we recommend:

- Review your full pay structure - not just minimum wage roles
- Ensure compliance across all worker categories
- Communicate changes clearly with your workforce

If you're unsure how these changes affect your business, we're always happy to talk it through.

# Spotlight on Employment Rights: Key Updates

## The Fair Work Agency

The introduction of the Fair Work Agency will bring increased enforcement of employment rights.

Employers should expect:

- Greater scrutiny of pay and working practices
- A requirement to evidence compliance
- Potential penalties for non-compliance

## What to do now:

- Ensure contracts, policies, and handbooks are fully up to date
- Double-check payroll accuracy (including holiday pay and hours worked)
- Keep clear and organised records - this is more important than ever



# Statutory Sick Pay (SSP): Now Confirmed

Statutory Sick Pay reforms are now official, and they represent one of the most significant changes for employers this year.

## Key changes include:

- SSP payable from day one of sickness
- Removal of the lower earnings limit
- Payments set at 80% of normal weekly earnings (or the statutory rate, whichever is lower)

## Important note for employers & agencies:

These changes apply to all businesses, including recruitment agencies.

As an agency, Bennett Staff may be liable to pay SSP in certain circumstances, depending on the employment status and assignment structure of the worker. This is a key consideration for both us and our clients when engaging temporary staff.

## What this means in practice:

- More workers will qualify for SSP
- Employers and agencies may see increased costs
- Clear processes and communication will be essential

## What we recommend:

- Review employment contracts and policies to reflect the new rules
- Ensure payroll systems are correctly configured
- Strengthen absence management procedures (e.g. return-to-work meetings, absence tracking)
- Speak to us if you're unsure how this affects your temporary workforce

We're here to help you navigate this change with confidence.

## Stronger Workplace Protections

New expectations around workplace conduct - particularly relating to preventing harassment - are also developing.

Employers will need to demonstrate that they are taking reasonable, proactive steps to create a safe working environment.

### What to do:

- Review and refresh your workplace policies
- Provide training where needed
- Encourage open communication within teams

## What This Means for Local Employers

2026 is shaping up to be a year where planning ahead really pays off. With wage increases and employment law changes now taking effect, businesses that stay proactive will be in the strongest position.

### Key focus areas:

- Preparation over reaction - getting ahead of changes early
  - Clarity - ensuring staff understand their pay and rights
  - Partnership - working closely with recruitment and HR specialists
- That's where we come in - to help you navigate it all with confidence.



## Introducing: Rob's Round-Up

We were really excited to launch our brand-new VLOG series, Rob's Round-Up.

In each episode, Rob shares:

- The latest employment law updates
- Market insights from across Tameside and Greater Manchester
- Practical advice for employers and job seekers

It's a quick, accessible way to stay informed on the issues that matter most and there's a special guest with every episode!

👉 Subscribe here to stay up to date:

<https://bennettstaff.co.uk/>

(Be sure to keep an eye on our website and social channels for the latest episodes!)





# A Look Inside Bennett Staff

We've made some exciting improvements to our office space to better support our clients and candidates.

## **New Private Interview Room**

We now have a dedicated interview room available for client use, offering a professional and confidential space to meet candidates away from your own premises.

### **This is ideal for:**

- Discreet hiring processes
- First-stage interviews
- Candidate screenings in a neutral environment

If you'd like to make use of this space, just let us know - we'd be happy to arrange it for you. And of course, our door is always open for a chat, a meeting, or a cup of tea.

## **Looking Ahead**

As we continue through 2026, the employment landscape will keep evolving but with the right support, these changes can create real opportunities.

Whether you're hiring, job hunting, or simply need guidance, Bennett Staff is here to help.

Thank you, as always, for your continued trust and partnership.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss how these updates affect you, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



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