



Northumberland Association of Local Councils



NALC publishes HR templates to support parish and town councils with

Employment Rights Act changes

We have published four HR policy templates to support parish and town councils following changes introduced through the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Produced by our employment law, HR and health & safety services partner WorkNest, the templates will help parish and town councils prepare for changes coming into force during 2026 and ensure their policies remain compliant with the latest employment legislation.

partner's paternity leave if the mother or primary adopter dies. The leave must be taken within 52 weeks of the child's birth, adoption, placement or entry to Great Britain for overseas adoptions.

We have updated the [paternity leave and pay policy](#) to reflect that paternity leave will become a day one right for employees from 6 April 2026. From 18 February 2026, newly eligible employees will also be able to give notice of their intention to take leave.

The [sickness absence policy](#) has been revised to reflect changes to statutory sick pay (SSP), which from 6 April 2026 will be payable from the first full day of sickness absence and available to all eligible employees regardless of earnings. SSP will be calculated at 80% of average weekly earnings or the flat weekly rate, whichever is lower.

We have also updated the [whistleblowing policy](#) to reflect sexual harassment becoming a qualifying disclosure under whistleblowing legislation from 6 April 2026, strengthening protections for employees making disclosures relating to sexual harassment.

NALC have more HR templates [HERE](#)



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BBC's The Repair Shop on the Road seeks parish and town councils' community treasures

We are backing the BBC's The Repair Shop on the Road television show hunt for meaningful objects located in parish and town council areas that are at the heart of the community, which tell a powerful local story and represent a shared history, identity or moment in time for a town, village or group of people.

The show is keen to hear about:

- Historic objects linked to your town or local heritage.
- Items from community spaces such as village halls, theatres, sports clubs, or places of worship.
- Objects connected to local industries, traditions, or lost ways of life.
- Pieces that hold strong emotional significance for a wider community (not just an individual).
- Landmarks or features that have fallen into disrepair and require specialist restoration.

In particular, they are looking for objects that:

- Have been seen, used, or recognised by the wider community.
- Have a story that spans generations.
- Would benefit from the expertise of specialist craftspeople to bring them back to life.

If selected, The Repair Shop's team of experts will travel to your parish and town council to carry out the restoration, helping to preserve and celebrate your community's history for future generations.

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television.

If your parish or town council has an item that fits the brief, please contact repair@ricochet.co.uk and include a photo of the item, a brief description and why it matters to your community.



Dinnington Parish Council Vacancy for Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

Dinnington Parish Council are seeking a highly motivated, enthusiastic person for the role of Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

The successful applicant will be required to provide professional support to the Council in the management of its resources and to ensure that all legal, statutory and regulatory obligations are met.

We are looking for someone who has excellent organisational and communication skills. Financial, administrative and good IT skills are essential.

This home based post is for 5 hours per week. The postholder will be expected to be flexible with their availability, including attending evening meetings in the village on the third Wednesday of the month.

Salary is in accordance with Local Government NJC SCP 8-12 (£26,824 to £28,598 pro rata).

For an application pack, please email Dinningtonparishcouncil@hotmail.com

For more information about the role, please contact the current Clerk Karon Hadfield on 07841 650640 or email as above.

Closing date for applications is Monday 1 June 2026



NALC AUTUMN CONFERENCE

A date for your diary - Thursday 8th October at County Hall - 5pm - 8pm. Two places are allocated per Council - more information on how to book will go direct to your Clerk.

The format will be similar to previous years, with NCC Officers available to chat to you in a market place setting and an area for presentations covering a range of topics.

We will give you more information closer to the date. We look forward to seeing you there.



ONLINE TRAINING WITH THE PARKINSON PARTNERSHIP

THE ROLE OF INTERNAL AUDIT - £35

Wednesday 3rd June 10am - 11:30am

For councillors and officers who want to understand the role of the internal auditor, what to expect from them and how to appoint one.

(Please note, this is NOT a training session for people who want to undertake internal audits)

This session explains the role of the internal auditor in providing assurance to the council that it has sound financial controls.

Topics include:

- legislation and guidance
- Roles and responsibilities
- Internal controls
- how the council appoints an internal auditor
- Scope of internal audit
- Reviewing internal control
- Internal audit reports

Session benefits:

By the end of this session you will:

- Understand the purpose of internal audit
- Be aware of relevant legislation and sources of guidance
- Understand how a council should appoint an internal auditor
- Recognise the importance of internal controls
- Be aware of the need to review effectiveness

FINANCE FOR COUNCILLORS - £35

Tuesday 21st May 10am - 11:30am

or

Tuesday 4th June 10am - 11:30am

Details

This session is for councillors only and is designed to give them a greater understanding of their duties with regard to the council's finances.

Topics include:

- Roles and responsibilities
- setting a budget and precept
- Financial control
- The Annual Governance & Accountability Return
- Internal and external audit
- How VAT applies to local councils

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- Be aware of relevant legislation and sources of guidance
- Be aware of how the council's accounts are prepared and audited
- Recognise the importance of internal controls
- Understand how VAT law applies to your council

PROCUREMENT - £35

Tuesday 2nd June 10am - 11:30am

or

Thursday 16th July 10am - 11:30am

Details

For anyone involved in procuring goods and services, preparing tenders, or entering into contracts on behalf of local councils.

This session introduces the new rules of the Procurement Act 2023, which came into force on 24 February 2025 and replace the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The session covers the basics of procurement for local councils – inviting quotes, producing specifications and tender documentation, achieving competition and value for money.

Topics include:

- Overview and purpose of the Procurement Act 2023
- Procurement principles and objectives
- Procurement lifecycle
- Conflicts of Interest
- Roles and responsibilities
- Thresholds
- Below threshold contracts
- Excluded contracts
- Direct Awards
- Estimating the contract value
- Scope/Specification
- Frameworks
- Procurement procedures
- Timescales
- Publication of your procurement
- Assessment summaries
- Contract Award Notice & Standstill
- Contracting authorities' requirements (mandatory or voluntary).

INTERNAL CONTROLS - £35

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This session gives councillors and officers an understanding of the need for internal controls and how they work, with practical examples and case studies.

Topics include:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Financial risks
- Purpose of internal controls
- Case studies
- Examples of controls
- Review of internal controls

By the end of this session you will:

- Understand the council's and RFO's duties regarding internal control
- Be aware of the purpose of internal controls
- Be able to identify examples of internal controls
- Know when to review internal controls

VAT PARTIAL EXEMPTION - £35

Thursday 2nd July 10am - 11:30am

Details:

For clerks, finance staff and councillors of councils that lease or hire out land and buildings (such as village halls, community centres, meeting rooms or markets), who need to understand when their council is at risk of not being able to reclaim VAT. Essential for any council contemplating major building projects, or incurring significant expenditure on running these facilities.

This session is for those who already understand the rules of VAT (possibly from having attended one of our VAT sessions) and need to work out whether their council can reclaim VAT in relation to its use of land.

This session is unlikely to be of benefit for councils spending less than £50,000 a year, or for anyone that doesn't already understand the difference between business and non-business activities or between taxable and exempt supplies.

This session explains when VAT cannot be reclaimed in relation to exempt activities and what options may be available if you are in that situation.

Topics include:

- law and guidance
- non-business, taxable and exempt uses of land
- Apportionment of costs
- Partial exemption calculations
- Occasional breaches

**To book onto a course please email Graeme -
info@northumberlandalc.uk**



Standing Together: NALC's Commitment to Civility and Respect

The Civility and Respect Project is a dedicated effort to ensure that local councils—parish and town councils—are positive, inclusive environments where everyone is treated with dignity.

Why Civility Matters

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation have no place in local democracy. Such behaviors not only harm individuals—including councillors, clerks, and staff—but also hinder the effectiveness of councils, prevent people from engaging with local issues, and damage public trust.

The project, spearheaded by NALC, SLCC and One Voice Wales (OVW), aims to move beyond simple policies and change the culture of the sector.

The Civility and Respect Pledge

A cornerstone of this movement is the civility and Respect Pledge. The Pledge is an easy-to-sign commitment enabling councils to demonstrate their dedication to tackling poor behavior.

By signing the pledge, councils agree to:

- Treat everyone with respect: Ensure all councillors, staff, and volunteers are treated with dignity.
- Implement training: Put in place training programmes for staff and councillors.
- Adopt Codes of Conduct: Sign up for the LGA Model Code of Conduct.
- Utilize policies: Implement the [Dignity at Work Policy](#) to replace older bullying policies.
- Call out bad behavior: Commit to taking action when bullying or harassment occurs.

Over 1,000 local councils have already taken the pledge, showing overwhelming support

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Taking Personal Responsibility

While councils sign the pledge, NALC has introduced the Councillors Statement of Assurance asking individual members to personally commit to upholding the highest standards of behavior. This emphasizes that fostering a positive culture is a responsibility shared by all, from council leaders to residents.

Get Involved

To support these initiatives, NALC provides a wealth of resources, including:

- [Best practice templates](#), such as a model bullying and harassment policy.
- [Training modules](#) designed to enhance skills for handling difficult situations.
- [Social media guidance](#) for handling online discourse.

By standing together, local councils can ensure that local democracy remains effective, respectful, and open to all. Take the pledge and help build a stronger, more civil community.

Northumberland County Office is only an email away.

Best regards

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