



We hope you and your teams are well.

As this week is **UK National Inclusion Week**, we have been hearing lots of conversations about inclusion and the influence it can have on the experience of people within our workplaces.

People bring different experiences, perspectives, personalities, backgrounds and ways of thinking to their roles. When those differences are welcomed, they can create opportunities for broader conversations, different approaches to challenges and a deeper understanding across the team.

But inclusion is not simply about having different people within a team. It is also about whether those people feel that they genuinely belong, that their contribution is valued and that they have the opportunity to participate and thrive.

Knowing that your perspective will be listened to and feeling recognised for the contribution you make can influence whether someone feels part of a team.

This matters because when people feel respected and included, they may feel more comfortable sharing their perspective, raising concerns or speaking up when something does not feel right. In care, where communication and openness can have a direct impact on the people being supported, creating space for people to be heard is particularly important.

We are also reminded of the strong connection between inclusion and retention. Research has found that employees in organisations with higher levels of inclusion were **45% more likely to stay**, while **73% of UK workers say they would stay longer with an employer where they experience a genuine sense of belonging**.

For organisations where recruitment continues to be challenging, and where continuity and consistency of care can be affected by staff turnover, inclusion is worth considering as part of both recruitment and retention strategies. Ultimately, creating an inclusive workplace is not about achieving a particular workforce profile or introducing a set of initiatives. It is about creating an environment where people feel respected, listened to and able to contribute as themselves, every day.

When reflecting on your inclusion strategy, the question to ask is less ***“Who is in our team?”***, and more ***“How does it feel to be part of our team?”***



This week is also **National Pensions Awareness Week**, providing an opportunity to think about something that can sometimes sit quietly in the background of employment, but can have a much longer-term impact on people’s financial wellbeing.

For employers, providing a workplace pension is an important part of the responsibilities that come with employing people. Under automatic enrolment, eligible staff must be enrolled into a qualifying workplace pension and employers are required to contribute towards it.

But pensions can also be part of a much wider conversation about how organisations value and retain their people.

It can be easy to focus on the things that have an immediate impact: pay, rotas, flexibility and day-to-day working conditions. These things matter, but so can the benefits that support someone’s longer-term future.

A workplace pension is one example. Research has found that employer pension contributions are among the benefits employees value, suggesting that organisations may be missing an opportunity if pensions are treated simply as a compliance requirement rather than part of the wider employee offer.

There is also something to be said for how pensions are communicated. People do not always understand what their workplace pension means for them, particularly early in their careers. Helping staff understand what is being contributed, how their pension works and where they can find further information can make the benefit feel more tangible.

National Pensions Awareness Week is a useful reminder that sometimes the benefits that matter most are not necessarily the ones people notice every day, but the ones that demonstrate an organisation is thinking about its people for the longer term. Taking the time to help people understand and make the most of the

support available to them can also contribute to a culture where people feel valued, supported and invested in, helping to create a workplace where people want to stay.



The year really is flying by, and as we head for October, many care services will already be starting to think about the months ahead and the additional pressures that winter can bring. For care leaders, this can be a useful time to look at contingency

arrangements and, importantly, consider whether they would work in practice if they were needed.

Having a plan in place is one thing, but making sure the people responsible for putting it into action feel confident about what is expected of them is equally important.

Of course, it is not possible to anticipate everything that might happen. But creating some space to consider what could happen, and how the organisation would respond, can help teams feel more prepared when unexpected situations arise. For staff, knowing who to contact, how changes will be communicated and what support is available can provide reassurance when circumstances become more challenging. For the people receiving care, good preparation can help minimise disruption and maintain a sense of safety, familiarity and continuity.

Skills for Care is hosting a webinar for registered managers looking at **winter pressures and contingency planning**, with a focus on practical considerations for preparing services and managing potential challenges.

[Find out more about the webinar here](#)



From October 2026, new legal obligations relating to third-party harassment will come into force. For care providers, this raises some important questions about how employment responsibilities sit alongside the realities of working in care environments.

For staff, knowing that they can speak up when something does not feel right, and that their concerns will be listened to and taken seriously, can make a real difference. Clear expectations around respectful behaviour, alongside supportive

and consistent processes for responding when concerns arise, are equally important. For managers, understanding what is expected of them and having the right guidance to respond appropriately can help ensure staff feel supported, while maintaining positive relationships with the people receiving care and those around them.

RWK Goodman are hosting a webinar exploring the new third-party harassment provisions and what they mean for health and social care organisations. The session will look at the new duty to prevent third-party harassment, the protected characteristics covered, potential risks and how organisations can navigate situations where employment and regulatory responsibilities overlap.

Wednesday 30 September 2026, 10am–11am

[Find out more and register for the webinar](#)



World Mental Health Day - 10th October.

This year's theme is **“Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change,”** feels particularly relevant within the workplace, where listening to people's lived experiences can play an important role in creating a mentally healthy culture.

A mentally healthy workplace culture is not simply about providing support when someone is struggling. It is also about creating an environment where people feel psychologically safe enough to say when something is not working, talk about challenges and ask for support without worrying about being judged or treated differently.

For those working in care, where the emotional demands of the role can be significant, having that space to speak openly can make a real difference. Staff may be supporting others through difficult circumstances while managing pressures of their own, and sometimes being able to say “I'm struggling” is an important first step towards getting the right support.

Employers have an important role to play in ensuring that staff mental health is not only protected when difficulties arise, but actively supported and promoted through everyday conversations, relationships and workplace culture. This means creating opportunities for people to talk, listening to what they have to say and considering how their experiences can inform positive change.

World Mental Health Day is a chance for employers to bring conversations around staff mental health to the forefront and demonstrate that wellbeing is something that matters throughout the year, not just on one particular day.

Looking for a simple way to get the conversation started? The Mental Health Foundation's **Tea & Talk workplace pack** provides resources to help teams come together, talk about mental health and create space for more open conversations. [Find out more and access the workplace pack](#)



Research from the CIPD found that around 8.5 million workers in the UK say their work has a negative impact on their mental health. It is a reminder that the way work is organised, managed and experienced can have a significant impact on people's wellbeing.

National Work Life Week takes place from 12–16 October, providing an opportunity to think about the relationship between work and wellbeing, and what makes a workplace somewhere people can thrive.

Good work is not simply about having a nice job. It can be about workload, relationships, management, flexibility, having a voice and feeling that you are supported and valued. These everyday aspects of working life can all influence how people experience work and, in turn, how they feel.

A key topic for National Work Life Week is work-life balance. It is important that employers consider how they can support good work-life balance for everyone, while being mindful that this will look different for each person. Looking beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and considering where there may be opportunities to adapt working arrangements around individual circumstances can help people feel that their needs are understood and valued.

Managers have an important role to play in this. Knowing their teams, understanding what support or flexibility may be available and creating an environment where people feel comfortable asking for what they need can all make a difference. Just as importantly, work-life balance should not always have to become a conversation only when someone is struggling. Considering people's different needs as part of good workforce planning and everyday management can help create a more supportive working environment from the outset.

Working Families has created a toolkit for employers for National Work Life Week, with ideas and resources to help organisations think about how they can support better work-life balance.

[National Work Life Week: A Toolkit for Employers](#)

How do you know your people feel safe and confident to speak up to their line managers when they are struggling?

Thought for the month:

September gives us two important opportunities to think about suicide, loss and the importance of looking out for one another. Last week, on **September 10th**, we marked **World Suicide Prevention Day**, and today, **September 17th**, is **National Suicide Memorial Day for Health and Care Workers**.

Research has found that **carers had a risk of suicide that was almost twice the national average**. For employers, this highlights the importance of recognising the pressures that can come with working in care and taking responsibility for creating workplaces where wellbeing can be discussed openly and support is accessible.

Working in health and social care is not easy. Staff are often supporting people through some of the most difficult moments in their lives, and that responsibility can take a toll. At the same time, people may also be experiencing difficulties outside of work, whether that is through relationships, finances, family circumstances, grief or their own personal wellbeing.

People can often continue coming to work, supporting others and doing everything that is expected of them without any obvious signs that something is wrong. Someone may never say that they are struggling, and sometimes by the time those around them realise just how difficult things have become, it can be too late.

Creating working environments where people feel able to say when things are difficult, where asking for support is not seen as a weakness and where people know they do not have to manage everything alone is vital.

This can include considering how managers respond when someone says they are struggling, whether staff feel comfortable asking for support, the quality of debriefs and supervision, and whether people have opportunities to talk openly about how they are feeling.

It can also be found in the everyday things that help protect wellbeing, such as encouraging people to take proper breaks and have time to fully switch off, promoting healthy boundaries and making it clear that looking after yourself is part of working well in care. Helping staff recognise that caring for themselves matters just as much as caring for others can be an important part of workplace culture.

Creating this kind of environment does not mean organisations can always prevent people from experiencing difficulties, but it can make a significant difference to someone who is.

One of the most valuable things organisations can do is take a proactive approach to wellbeing. It is not enough to have support available and assume

that people will reach out when they need it. Creating a culture where people feel genuinely supported requires ongoing attention to how teams communicate, how managers respond to concerns and whether staff feel able to talk before things reach crisis point.

 **Further reading/watching:**

 [How to Embed EAPs, Train Leaders and Build a Psychologically Safe Culture](#)

 [Employment Rights Bill \(Act 2025\) - What is the Fair Work Agency?](#)

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Warm wishes for the month ahead.



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