

Breedon Bulletin

Welcome to the June edition of the Breedon Bulletin.

As summer approaches, so too does a new wave of employment law changes and workforce expectations. This month's edition focuses on key shifts employers need to understand now to stay ahead of compliance risks, protect their business, and support their people.

From zero hours contract reforms to building stronger managers, this issue is packed with insight and actionable tips.

As we enter Pride Month, we also take a look at building an inclusive workplace for all and reflect on what inclusion really means.

Dates for Your Diary

Key deadlines, awareness and celebration dates for this month:

- 1st June: Pride Month starts
- 1st June: Global Day of Parents
- 5th June: World Environment Day
- 9th - 15th June: International Men's Health Week
- 9th - 15th June: National Carers Week
- 9th - 15th June: Loneliness Awareness Week
- 14th June: Global Wellness Day
- 20th June: Bring your Dog to Work Day
- 22nd June: Windrush Day
- 30th June: Modern Slavery Statements Deadline
- 30th June - 13th July: Wimbledon Championships



Neurodiversity in Focus: Tribunal Finds Discrimination Over Manager's Behaviour

An employment tribunal has found that a worker with ADHD was subject to disability discrimination after his manager repeatedly displayed visible frustration, including sighing and exaggerated exhales when discussing his performance.

The employee had raised the possibility of being neurodiverse before receiving an ADHD diagnosis. Despite this, his manager continued to criticise his working patterns and made dismissive remarks about his condition.

Although the tribunal upheld the fairness of his eventual dismissal, it ruled that the company failed in its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and the manager's non-verbal conduct constituted unlawful discrimination. The case highlights the importance of early intervention, appropriate support, and neurodiversity training for managers. It's a reminder that inclusion isn't just about policy, it's about everyday behaviours, tone, and empathy.

Are your managers equipped to support neurodiverse employees?

Leadership Has Changed – Has Your Training Caught Up?



In today's world of hybrid teams, evolving employee expectations, and rising mental health concerns, the traditional model of management is no longer enough. Employees don't need perfect problem-solvers, they need people leaders. And unless we shift how we train and support those in management roles, businesses risk falling behind.

The Myth of the All-Knowing Manager

Many managers still feel a quiet pressure to have all the answers. That mindset, while understandable, can become a barrier. It stops managers from asking questions, being vulnerable, or simply checking in with team members in a meaningful way. The modern workforce doesn't expect managers to be counsellors or therapists. But they do expect empathy, approachability, and a willingness to listen.

What employees really want is simple: someone who sees them, hears them, and supports them, especially when the work environment is remote or hybrid, where connection can easily slip.

The Human Impact of Leadership

Research shows that the person with the greatest influence on an employee's mental health isn't a GP or even a therapist, it's their manager. That might sound surprising, but it makes sense. Managers shape workloads, set expectations, and control how feedback and recognition are delivered. If they don't engage, employees may feel dismissed or unsupported, even unintentionally.

So why do so many leaders still avoid these conversations? Often, it comes down to fear - fear of saying the wrong thing, not knowing how to respond, or stepping over boundaries. Without proper training, many managers simply stay silent. That silence is costly, not only to wellbeing, but to performance, retention and trust.

Redefining Leadership

It's time to stop viewing soft skills as "nice to have." Emotional intelligence and active listening must be embedded into leadership development from day one.

- Embedding wellbeing and communication into manager training. It's not enough to train managers on policies, they need coaching on how to lead people, especially in challenging moments.
- Providing practical tools. This includes conversation frameworks, mental health signposting, and referral pathways
- Normalising vulnerability in leadership. Managers should feel safe saying, "I don't know, but I'm here to help you find support."

Leadership development must evolve to reflect the skills that today's workplaces truly require. That means moving beyond technical skillsets and promoting individuals who can connect, communicate, and care.

From Performance to People Skills

Consider the following:

- Are you promoting people into leadership based on people skills or technical success?
- Do your performance reviews measure a manager's impact on team wellbeing?
- Are empathy and inclusion part of your leadership competency frameworks?

If the answer is no, now is the time to change that.

Train for Tomorrow's Workplace

Managers don't need to fix everything. But they do need to show up, check in, and create space for conversation. With the right support, they can do exactly that. The difference between a disengaged team and a thriving one often comes down to whether leaders are equipped and empowered to lead with humanity.

At Breedon, we're helping businesses redefine leadership through targeted, practical training that builds confidence in managers at all levels. Because when we train people to lead better, we don't just get better teams, we get better businesses.

Pride in Practice: Building an Inclusive Workplace for All

As we mark Pride Month, it's the perfect time to reflect on what inclusion really means, not just in principle, but in practice. For too many organisations, inclusion begins and ends with a policy or a rainbow logo in June. But for meaningful change, we must move beyond visibility and embed inclusion into everyday culture, behaviours and leadership. For LGBT+ employees, workplace inclusion is more than a tick-box. It's about safety, visibility, and the ability to bring their full selves to work, without fear, judgment or disadvantage.

Inclusion Isn't a Slogan – It's a Standard

An inclusive workplace ensures that everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, feels respected, valued and heard. But for many LGBT+ employees, that vision is still out of reach. Recent reports show that:

- More than half of LGBT+ employees in the UK have experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace in the last five years.
- Around 1 in 3 are actively seeking more inclusive employers.
- Nearly 30% choose to hide their sexual orientation at work, fearing negative consequences or exclusion.
- Young LGBT+ employees are particularly vulnerable, with 18- to 24-year-olds reporting the highest rates of mistreatment.

This matters not just ethically, but operationally. When people feel unsafe or unseen, it affects their wellbeing, performance and commitment. When they feel included, it drives innovation, loyalty and growth.

Why Inclusion Drives Business Success

The case for inclusion is undeniable:

- Engagement and retention improve when employees feel respected and represented.
- Customer experience benefits from diverse teams who understand a range of needs and identities.
- Reputation and employer brand are strengthened, especially among Gen Z and Millennials who expect employers to lead on equity.
- And let's not forget the commercial dimension: the UK LGBT+ community has an estimated purchasing power of £6 billion annually.

Yet, barriers persist. Some managers view sexual orientation as a “private matter.” Others avoid the topic entirely, fearing awkwardness or saying the wrong thing. And outdated language or assumptions, even unintentional, can leave LGBT+ employees feeling isolated, ignored or misrepresented.

What True Inclusion Looks Like

To build a genuinely inclusive workplace, employers should actively foster belonging. That means:

- Educating managers on respectful language, inclusive communication, and how to spot and challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Reviewing policies and training to ensure all sexual orientations are acknowledged and respected.
- Creating safe spaces for people to share their identities without pressure, risk, or tokenism.
- Acknowledging that people's experiences of discrimination may differ based on race, gender identity, disability, or age as well as sexuality.
- Avoiding broad generalisations. Not all LGBT+ experiences are the same. Avoid umbrella terms like “gay” when referring to the entire community - they risk erasing the visibility of other groups.

And inclusion must be modelled from the top. Senior leaders need to speak up, show up, and make clear that equality isn't optional, it's the baseline.

Focus on Zero Hours, New Rules

As part of the upcoming Employment Rights Bill, sweeping changes are set to transform how employers manage zero hours and low hours contracts. While the headlines might suggest a clampdown, the reality is more nuanced and zero hours contracts won't be banned, but they will be tightly regulated under a new legal framework designed to curb "one-sided flexibility."

The message from government is clear: flexibility must go both ways. And if you currently engage staff on unpredictable or minimal hours, the time to prepare is now.

What's Changing – and Why It Matters

Zero hours contracts are a staple in sectors like hospitality, logistics and retail, offering agility for employers and autonomy for workers. But when these arrangements become unstable or exploitative, they can cause financial uncertainty, disengagement, and reputational risk.

The Employment Rights Bill introduces several new obligations for businesses using such arrangements, including:

- A right to request a guaranteed number of hours for workers who've followed a regular pattern over a set period (likely 12 weeks).
- Minimum notice for shifts, along with proper notice and compensation if shifts are changed or cancelled.
- Clear rules around repeat offers for guaranteed hours contracts if a worker declines the first.

This won't just affect traditional zero hours workers, it will also apply to "low hours" workers whose official contracts don't reflect their actual workloads.



What Employers Will Need to Do

To comply with the new rules, businesses will need to make significant changes to how they manage, record, and review working patterns. Here's what that looks like in practice:

1. Track Hours Accurately
2. Offer New Contracts Promptly
3. Review Workforce Strategy
4. Don't Forget Agency Workers
5. Communicate Early and Clearly

Don't Wait Until You're Legally Obligated

Employers who act now will be far better positioned to absorb the changes with minimal disruption. Those who delay? They risk confusion, operational friction, and non-compliance when the new rules hit.

Ask yourself:

- Do we know how many workers we have on zero or low hours?
- Are we currently tracking hours worked in a legally defensible way?
- Would our line managers know how to respond to a request for guaranteed hours?

If there's any uncertainty, it's time to act.

Need a Little Help?

Whether you rely on flexible labour occasionally or across your entire operation, we'll help you adjust your approach, stay compliant, and protect your agility.



Questions & Answers

Does an employee need to 'come out' at work to be protected under the Equality Act?

No. Protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation applies regardless of whether someone is open about their identity. Even perceived orientation is covered. Respect and confidentiality are key, especially during Pride Month and beyond.

Are we required to provide reasonable adjustments after a neurodiversity disclosure?

Yes. Once you're aware of a disability, including neurodivergence like ADHD or autism, you must consider reasonable adjustments promptly. Delay or failure to act can result in discrimination claims. Early support often prevents issues from escalating.

Is training on neurodiversity for line managers now a legal requirement?

It's not yet a legal requirement, but it's strongly advised, particularly as tribunals are increasingly recognising subtle behaviours (like tone and body language) as discriminatory. Investing in training can reduce legal risk and create a more inclusive environment.

Let's talk on the phone

Here are three questions for you:

- Do you currently have HR support?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you with them?
- If the answer isn't "I'm so delighted I could print 1,000 flyers to spread the word about them", let's jump on a video call

You know just how important it is to get proactive, responsive HR support. That's what we do. And we're taking on new clients.



YOUR HR EXPERT



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