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NCS HR
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THE NCS HR UPDATE

PRACTICAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS



Hello, I'm Nicola, Founder and HR Consultant at NCS HR Solutions.

September often feels like a fresh start. Summer holidays are behind us and businesses are looking ahead to the final few months of the year.

It has been a busy month for us too. We've supported clients with sexual harassment prevention training, management development, holiday and absence queries, employee relations, policy reviews and HR audits, alongside the everyday questions that come with managing people.

This is a good time to check what may need attention before the end of the year. Are policies up to date? Do managers feel confident handling difficult conversations? Is there anything that has been put off over the summer?

You don't have to tackle it all alone. We're here with practical, straightforward HR support to help you plan ahead and take some of the pressure off.

Nicola

Sexual harassment legislation is changing. *Is your business ready?*

From 30 October 2026, employers will need to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment at work. They will also have a responsibility to protect employees from harassment by third parties, such as customers and clients.

For small businesses, this is a good time to look beyond the policy document and ask what happens in practice:

- Have you considered where harassment risks could arise?
- Do employees know how to raise a concern?
- Are managers confident about responding to a report?
- Is training up to date?
- Would you be able to show the steps you have taken?

Taking action now can help you create a safer workplace and give your managers more confidence to handle concerns properly.

Our latest blog explains what is changing and how your business can prepare.

If you would like support reviewing your approach or arranging workplace training, please get in touch.

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Could workplace conflict be affecting your team?

Disagreements at work can happen in any business. When communication breaks down and concerns go unresolved, they can affect relationships, morale and the time managers spend trying to put things right.

Workplace mediation gives the people involved a voluntary, confidential space to talk through what has happened, understand each other's perspective and agree practical ways to move forward.



It may be worth considering mediation when:

- Colleagues are finding it difficult to work together
- Misunderstandings keep resurfacing
- Communication has broken down
- A manager needs support with a difficult working relationship
- You want to address concerns before they escalate

Resolving conflict early can help rebuild trust and reduce the disruption of a lengthy formal process. Mediation does not guarantee an agreement, but it gives everyone involved the opportunity to find a way forward.

As an OCN London accredited workplace mediator, I provide practical, impartial support tailored to your situation. Find out more about my workplace mediation service, or get in touch if you would like to talk through whether mediation could help your team.

HR Help: What you need to know

A Probation Review Is Overdue. Can We Just Extend the Probation Period?
Check the employee's contract and your probation policy first. Hold the review promptly, explain any concerns and give the employee a chance to respond. If you extend probation, confirm the improvements needed, the support available and the next review date in writing. Consider reasonable adjustments where relevant.

Should We Hold a Return-to-Work Meeting After a Short Sickness Absence?
Yes. A brief, private conversation helps you check the employee is well enough to return, ask whether they need support and keep your absence records accurate. It may also help you spot a pattern or an underlying concern.

Do We Need to Consider Harassment by Customers and Clients?
Yes. From 30 October 2026, employers will have a legal responsibility not to permit third parties, including customers and clients, to harass employees. September is a good time to consider where staff may face these risks, make sure they know how to report concerns and give managers clear guidance on how to respond. The steps needed will depend on your workplace and the risks your employees face.

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