OCTOBER 2026

NCS HR
HR SOLUTIONS

THE NCS HR UPDATE

PRACTICAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS



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

October is here, and with the final quarter underway, many businesses are balancing day-to-day demands with plans for the year ahead.

We've been busy supporting clients with sexual harassment prevention training, management development, absence queries, employee relations and policy reviews alongside the everyday questions .

With autumn also bringing menopause and mental health awareness into focus, it's a useful time to think about how supported your people feel. Would employees feel comfortable raising a concern? Do managers know how to respond? Are your policies helping guide those conversations?

As the end of the year approaches, taking time now to address outstanding people matters can help you start the new year feeling more prepared. We're here with practical, straightforward HR support to help you work through your priorities and take some of the pressure off.

Nicola

Menopause Awareness Month.

How can your business offer support?



Menopause can affect how someone feels at work, from their concentration and confidence to their energy levels. For small businesses, practical support starts with open conversations and managers who feel confident having them.

This is a good opportunity to look at your workplace and ask:

- Would employees feel comfortable asking for support?
- Do managers know how to approach a conversation sensitively?
- Could changes to temperature, breaks or working patterns help?
- Are you asking what each person needs rather than making assumptions?
- Do your policies give managers clear, practical guidance?

Small changes can make a real difference to someone's working day. Support should reflect the individual and continue beyond awareness month.

Our latest blog explores how small businesses can support employees experiencing menopause.

If you would like support reviewing your policies or helping managers feel more confident having these conversations, please get in touch.

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Too much time spent on HR admin? *Give your business room to Breathe.*

Holiday requests in your inbox, employee details on spreadsheets and policies saved in different folders. Keeping on top of people admin can take up more time than you realise.

Breathe brings your everyday HR tasks together, helping you:

- Manage holiday requests and view team availability.
- Record absence and spot patterns.
- Keep employee records and documents in one secure place.
- Give employees access to their information.

Additional modules can help you manage training and working hours too:

- Breathe Learn: Give your team access to online training courses covering areas such as people management, wellbeing, equality and diversity, and compliance. Assign relevant courses and track completion to keep a clear record of learning.
- Time and rota management: Create and share rotas, record working hours and give employees visibility of their shifts, helping you stay organised and reduce everyday queries.

As a Breathe Gold Partner, we can help you decide which features and modules suit your business, support the setup and provide ongoing help.

If you would like to spend less time chasing paperwork and more time supporting your team, please get in touch.

HR Help: What you need to know

We Don't Recognise a Trade Union. Do the New Access Rules Affect Us?

They could. From 30 October 2026, subject to parliamentary approval, independent unions will be able to request workplace access even where they are not recognised. Access does not automatically mean union recognition. Make sure managers know who should handle requests. The Central Arbitration Committee can only impose access agreements on employers with at least 21 workers.

Do We Need Right-to-Work Checks for People Who Aren't Employees?

Potentially, yes. From 1 October 2026, the scheme covers additional arrangements, including certain workers and individual subcontractors. Calling someone "self-employed" does not settle the question. Review new arrangements, confirm who is responsible and ensure the appropriate checks happen before work begins.

Is Having a Sexual Harassment Policy Enough?

A policy needs to be supported by action. Changes planned for 30 October 2026, subject to parliamentary processes, will strengthen prevention duties and introduce responsibility for harassment by customers and other third parties. Review risks, refresh training and ensure staff know how to report concerns.

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