

For employers who care about their people

PEOPLE TALK

Probation Hack?

Your HR Calendar

Why a VA may be **the solution**

to so many of your problems





Welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of PeopleTalk.

While I hope you enjoyed the long hot summer, with temperatures possibly turning cooler, it is time for that ‘back to school’ feeling.

What does this mean for your business?

No, not time for a new uniform, but a chance to take a step back and do some reviewing and planning.

What has your HR calendar got planned for you this quarter? Sorry, did I hear you say ‘*What HR Calendar?*’? Oh, that’s ok, I’ve got you covered, just take a look at the HR Calendar article.

We have an amazing guest writer this month in the form of Dr Natalie Isaia. She is a clinical psychologist who specialises in businesses. Her article on how to thrive under pressure as a compassionate leader is fascinating.

We continue to explore the implementation of The Employment Rights Act and what it means for your business and we look at a slightly innovative way some companies may be able to take a more informed decision about their new hires.

As a Breathe partner, I also share an update on the latest changes and why having an HR system is now vital for your business.

I’m also sharing the relaunch of The HR Club and explain why our model is changing. It means greater flexibility for you, our clients.

Donna

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Your HR Calendar

“An HR Calendar turns important people activity from a last minute scrambles into part of the business plan.”

Most businesses have a financial calendar and an operational plan, but very few have a proper people calendar. A properly planned HR Calendar keeps everyone aligned, reduces disruption and ensures there are no unwelcome surprises.

When is payday next month? Is the office closing between Christmas and New Year? When are appraisals taking place? Can employees book holiday during your busiest trading period?

These may sound like simple questions, but if the planning hasn't been done, documented and communicated, they can quickly create confusion, frustration and unnecessary work.

Even the smallest of businesses should have an HR Calendar designed around the way it operates. This is not a generic list of awareness days downloaded from the internet. It is a practical business tool which brings together the important dates affecting your staff, managers and operations.

Start with the essentials

Your HR Calendar may include:

- Pay dates and payroll cut-off dates
- Public and bank holidays
- Company closure dates
- Start & end of the holiday year
- Holiday blackout periods
- Annual appraisal & review windows
- Pay review dates
- Financial year-end announcements
- Staff meetings, away days & training
- Charity or volunteering days
- Relevant diversity & wellbeing campaigns

The detail will be different for every business.

A retailer may need to restrict holiday during December, for an accountant, this is more likely to be in January around tax deadlines. A hospitality business may be busiest on public holidays, while an office-based organisation may close completely between Christmas and New Year.

Your calendar must reflect your sector, staffing levels, customers and busiest periods.

Avoid preventable surprises

Imagine telling employees in November that they cannot take holiday during December. Several people may already have booked flights or made family arrangements.

Alternatively, employees may assume the business will close between Christmas and New Year because it did last year, only to discover that they are expected to work this year. These situations create resentment and put managers in difficult positions.

Do not rely on 'everyone knowing what normally happens'. Employees join, managers change and businesses evolve. Write it down.

“An HR Calendar turns important people activity from a last minute scrambles into part of the business plan.”

Plan more than the date

Putting 'annual appraisals – October' in a diary is not enough.

You need to work backwards. When will employees receive their forms? When should managers begin preparing? Do managers need training? Do staff need training? When must completed paperwork be returned? When will any pay review or promotion decisions be communicated?

For every major event, consider:

- What preparation is required?
- Who is responsible?
- Who needs to be consulted?
- When must employees be told?
- What follow-up action is needed?

This turns your calendar into a working management tool rather than a list of dates nobody uses.

Make awareness days meaningful

There are hundreds of awareness days, weeks and months. You do not need to recognise them all!!!

Choose initiatives which genuinely relate to your workforce, values, sector or customers.

Men's Health Awareness Month could support a wider wellbeing campaign. You might arrange a talk, promote health checks or remind staff about available support.

Cycle to Work Day could link to your environmental commitments and employee benefits. Take Your

Dog to Work Day may be fun in one workplace but completely unsuitable in another because of allergies, hygiene, safety or customer requirements.

These initiatives can also create opportunities for internal communication, recruitment marketing and social media. However, they still need planning. Who will organise the activity? What will it cost? Are there health and safety or equality implications?

One calendar, clearly owned

Responsibility for the HR Calendar should be clear. It may sit with HR, operations, the business owner or an administrator working with professional HR support. However, it should not be created in isolation.

Finance will know payroll and year-end dates. Marketing may want to plan content around campaigns and charity events. Operations will understand busy periods. Managers will know when appraisals and training can realistically take place.

Bring these areas together, create one agreed calendar and store it somewhere accessible. Review it regularly and communicate relevant dates through your HR system, team meetings, internal newsletter or shared calendar.

Plan early & communicate clearly

Your HR Calendar does not need to be complicated. It simply needs to reflect your business and give people enough notice to plan properly.

Start with the next 12 months. Add the fixed dates, identify recurring activities and then work backwards to include preparation and communication deadlines. Agree responsibility for each item.

Planning creates clarity. Documentation creates consistency. Communication creates trust.

When all three are in place, your employees know what is happening, your managers are prepared and your business is far less likely to be disrupted by something that should never have been a surprise.

Probation hack?

Why employers **need to rethink** recruitment, probation & temporary staffing

Employees will gain protection from ordinary unfair dismissal after six months rather than two years. This makes the traditional six month probation period increasingly risky and may encourage employers to use temporary agency staff before recruiting permanently.

For many years, a six-month probation period has been good practice. The final review takes place close to the end of that period and the employer decides whether the employee has passed, needs an extension or should be dismissed.

The Employment Rights Act changes this. Once the qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal reduces to six months in January 2027, a six month probation period will leave no safety margin.

What happens if the meeting is postponed? What if concerns have not been documented? What if notice still needs to be given? What if someone is off sick? Waiting until six months plus one day will be too late.

Shorten your probation period

We are advising employers to consider:

- A three month probation period, with the option of a two month extension
- A four month probation period, with the option of a one month extension

In both cases, any notice must expire before the employee reaches six months' service. Statutory notice may be added to the employee's period of continuous employment when calculating eligibility for an unfair dismissal claim.

The statutory minimum notice an employer must give is:

- No notice during the first month
- One week's notice during months two to six

Your contract can provide more notice, but think carefully before doing this during the probation period.

Candidates sometimes request a longer notice period before accepting a role. This may appear reasonable if they are leaving secure employment, but it reduces your flexibility if the relationship doesn't work out.

It may also be a red flag. Why do they require substantial protection before they have demonstrated that they can do the job?

A more sensible arrangement may be a short notice period during probation, increasing once probation has been passed. *"Probation is not a waiting room. It is an active process of assessment, feedback, support and documented decision-making."*

Manage probation from before day one

Employees must understand what is expected from the start. In reality this starts at the recruitment stage. Managers should train, hold regular reviews, provide feedback and document progress.

If probation is extended, confirm this in writing before the original period expires. Explain:

- Why more time is needed
- What improvement is required
- What support will be provided
- How success will be measured
- When the final decision will be made

An extension should not be used simply because the manager forgot to hold the review.



"Probation is not a waiting room. It is an active process of assessment, feedback, support & documented decision making."

No employee should reach their final probation meeting and be surprised to learn that they are being dismissed. If they are surprised, the process has not been managed properly.

Could temporary agency staff help?

Employing staff is also becoming more expensive and complex. Employees can request flexible working from day one. Paternity leave is a day-one right. Statutory Sick Pay is paid from the first eligible day of sickness, while wage and National Insurance costs continue to rise.

Some businesses will accept this as the cost of employing people. Others will outsource work to consultants, freelancers or overseas providers.

We are also seeing greater interest in temporary staff supplied through agencies.

Using an agency is not necessarily cheaper. You will pay agency fees and possibly a higher hourly rate. However, it may reduce some payroll administration and provide greater flexibility.

It may be useful when:

- You have won a new contract but do not know whether the workload will continue
- You need additional support for a specific project
- You are testing whether a new role is really needed
- You want more time to assess someone before offering permanent employment

A temp-to-perm arrangement gives both parties longer to decide whether the relationship is right.

For example, someone may work through an agency for three months before joining your payroll. Their direct employment and probation period would then begin, potentially giving you seven or eight months of working together before they acquire six months' service with your business.

Check the agency terms carefully, including any transfer fee if you employ the worker permanently. Agency workers also have their own legal rights, so this must be a genuine commercial arrangement rather than an artificial way of avoiding employment rights.

Six months does not mean risk-free

The qualifying period applies to ordinary unfair dismissal. It does not prevent employees bringing other claims from the beginning of their employment.

Day-one claims may include:

- Discrimination and harassment
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety
- Pregnancy & family related rights
- Unlawful deductions from wages
- Breach of contract
- Certain automatically unfair dismissals

Calling a dismissal a 'failed probation' does not make an unlawful decision safe.

Employers now need to consider recruitment, probation, notice and temporary staffing as one joined-up process. Review your contracts, train your managers, document concerns and make decisions promptly.

Temporary agency staff may provide additional flexibility, but whichever route you choose, the key is to plan carefully and act before time runs out.



Want some accountability?

Tired of repeating last year without significant progress?

Call Donna now to discover whether business coaching is right for you and your business. 0333 5678 876 or email donna@donnaobstfeld.co.uk



Are your finances in good hands?



Is payroll a monthly headache?



Do you have the right reporting?



Do you need strategic advice?

At SJC, we give ambitious businesses the finance team they need to grow without the cost and complexity of hiring in-house.

From finance operations, to tax and compliance and management accounts, we can tailor our services to your needs and give your business the chance to really take off.



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“When you focus your energy on the present the future will start taking care of itself.”

Nigel Risner
The Chief Zoo Keeper

Could you produce your **employment records** today?

Why every employer now needs a reliable HR system

The Fair Work Agency has increased the focus on employment law enforcement. If your records were inspected, could you quickly demonstrate that your employees have been paid correctly, received the right holiday and completed essential workplace training?

The Fair Work Agency walk into any workplace, including your home and request employment records, including pay information, holiday records and holiday pay calculations.

For employers, it is no longer enough to believe everything is correct. You need records which demonstrate it.

Could you quickly produce:

- Contracts of employment and employee details
- Working hours, salary and pay records
- Holiday entitlement, leave taken and holiday pay calculations
- Sickness absence and statutory sick pay records
- Training completion records
- Current policies and evidence that employees have read them
- Risk assessments, accidents and health and safety actions

If this information is spread across spreadsheets, inboxes, filing cabinets and managers' laptops, finding it can become time-consuming and risky.

Your employee may ask for the records too

Current and former employees can make a Data Subject Access Request, often called a DSAR, asking for copies of the personal data you hold on them.

If records are disorganised, responding can quickly become a

major piece of work. It also increases the risk of information being lost, overlooked or disclosed incorrectly.

A good HR system creates one secure source of truth. *"Compliance is not just about doing the right thing. It is about being able to prove that you did it."*

Why we recommend Breathe HR

Breathe is designed for small and medium sized employers. It provides a central place to manage employee records, holiday, absence, documents and day-to-day HR administration.

We particularly recommend three modules:

Breathe Core

Core helps you maintain employee records, manage holiday and sickness absence, support onboarding and provide employees with access to current policies and documents.

Instead of emailing revised policies and hoping everyone reads them, you can issue them through the system and retain a record of communication and acknowledgement.

Breathe Learn

The Learn module helps employers deliver and record essential training, including:

- Cyber security and data protection
- Sexual harassment prevention
- Health and safety awareness
- Management training
- New starter induction

The system records who completed the training and when, giving you evidence rather than relying on memory or attendance sheets.

Breathe Health & Safety

The Health & Safety module enables employers to record risk assessments, incidents and accidents, assign actions and keep safety related tasks under review.

Bringing HR, learning and health and safety together reduces duplication and makes it easier to identify missing records or overdue actions.

Could your records withstand scrutiny?

An HR system will not replace good HR advice, but it will provide the structure, audit trail and central record you need to manage your responsibilities properly.

Do not wait for an inspection, employee complaint or DSAR to discover that important information is missing.

Book a call with us to discuss how Breathe can help you improve your records and stay compliant.

"Compliance is not just about doing the right thing. It is about being able to prove that you did it."



The HR Club is changing

One flexible membership for every stage of your business

We are bringing all our monthly HR support clients together under one flexible service. The relaunched of The HR Club gives employers access to practical HR advice, an HR system and a named member of the team, while allowing support time to flex as the needs of the business change.

No two businesses need HR support in exactly the same way.

One month may be quiet. The next may bring a difficult absence, a grievance, a restructure, a new employee and three contracts which need updating. Traditional monthly packages do not always reflect that reality.

This is why we are relaunching The HR Club and bringing all our monthly paying clients into one flexible membership model.

Whether you employ two people or 200, the principle is the same: you

choose a level of support you expect to need, based on internal expertise, time and resources.

Support built around your business

Your membership is based on two main factors.

1. the number of employees you have
2. the amount of HR support you are likely to want each month

You may only need occasional reassurance and practical guidance. Alternatively, you may want us involved in day-to-day employee

relations, recruitment, management support and strategic planning.

The relaunched HR Club has seven membership levels, starting with the Essential package for businesses employing up to five people and progressing through to The Complete package for organisations with up to 200 employees. Monthly support is flexible and starts from just one hour per month.

“You are not buying a fixed list of HR tasks. You are buying access to experienced HR professionals who can support your business when you need them.”



“You are not buying a fixed list of HR tasks. You are buying access to experienced HR professionals who can support your business when you need them.”

Use your time where it matters

Your monthly time can be used across our any of our HR support services.

You might need help with:

- Contracts, policies and letters
- Sickness absence and performance concerns
- Disciplinary and grievances
- Recruitment and onboarding
- Redundancy or restructuring
- Manager guidance and difficult conversations
- HR planning and strategy
- Attendance at meetings, either online or in person

We do not expect your needs to be identical every month.

If you do not use all your hours, you can bank them for up to six months. If a larger issue arises and you need more time, you can borrow against up to three future months.

You can also top up your account at the membership rate of £150 per hour if your needs exceed the time available. This means you retain continuity of support without having to move immediately to a larger package.

More than an advice line

The HR Club is not a call centre or a library of generic templates.

You have access to experienced HR professionals who get to know you, your business and your team. We provide practical, commercially focused advice designed around the way you operate.

Membership also includes an HR system, with the level of functionality depending on your package. This may include Core HR, online learning and health and safety tools, helping you manage employee records, holiday, absence, training, policies and risk assessments in one place.

Members are also invited to our HR surgeries, receive access to the members' portal and benefit from discounts on additional services.

Flexibility without losing control

The aim is simple: to give employers enough support to manage their people properly without paying for unnecessary time or being left exposed when something unexpected happens.

As your business grows, your membership can grow with you. If your needs reduce, we can review the level of support you require.

You are not locked into a model which no longer fits your business. You have a flexible HR partnership designed to save you time, money and stress.

Book a call with us to discuss your business, your team and the level of The HR Club membership which would work best for you.

Why a VA may be **the solution** to so many of your problems

Many business owners are time poor and permanently stuck in the weeds. They spend their days delivering the work, while finance, marketing, bookings and administration are pushed into evenings, weekends or ignored altogether.

When you started your business, you probably did everything yourself.

You answered the phone, raised invoices, managed the diary, chased payments, posted on social media and somehow delivered the work your customers were paying for.

At first, that may have been necessary. But there comes a point when doing everything yourself stops saving money and starts restricting growth.

You may think you cannot afford help. The better question is: can you afford to continue without it?

Are you running a business or doing a job?

Most business owners set up because they are good at something. You may be a plumber, accountant, trainer or electrician. Your expertise is what brings money into the business.

But as the business grows, your time gets pulled into tasks which do not

need your expertise. You rearrange appointments, format proposals, update spreadsheets, chase invoices and manage emails.

These jobs are important. The problem is that you are the person doing them.

"If you spend your time doing £30 an hour work, you are not available to deliver the £100 an hour work only you can do."

Your time has a value

Spending three hours on administration does not make that task free.

If those hours could have been used for client work, sales or business development, there is a real opportunity cost.

If your time can generate £100 an hour and you use it for work which could be done by someone charging £30 an hour, you may be losing £70 an hour. There is also the personal cost.

How often do you do your bookkeeping at night, answer emails while sitting with your family or spend Sunday preparing for Monday? Do you work to live, or live to work?

A VA may be your first hire

A Virtual Assistant (VA) can be one of the most valuable first hires a small business makes.

Many VAs are self-employed professionals who support several businesses and charge for agreed hours or services.

A VA may help with:

- **Diary and appointment management**
- **Email monitoring**
- **Preparing proposals and documents**
- **Updating your CRM**
- **Invoicing and credit control**
- **Social media scheduling**
- **Customer follow-up**
- **General administration**

You do not need to hand over everything at once. Start with repetitive, time-consuming tasks which are easy to document a process.

Ask yourself: what am I doing regularly that someone else could be trained to do?

'Nobody can do it like I can'

This is one of the biggest barriers to delegation.

Nobody may do it exactly as you do it. But does it need to be done exactly your way, or simply accurately, consistently and on time?

VAs often do these tasks better than you, as this is their profession. A good VA will ask questions, create systems and may find a quicker way of doing something you have struggled with for years.

Delegation does not mean losing control. Done properly, it gives

you more control because work is planned, documented and completed consistently.

Get out of the weeds

Your role as a business owner is not just to deliver the service.

You need time to think, plan, sell, build relationships, review the numbers and decide where the business is going next.

A VA will not solve every problem, but the right person can remove many of the tasks which keep you busy without moving the business forward.

Look at your diary from the last two weeks. How much of your time was spent on work which genuinely required your expertise?

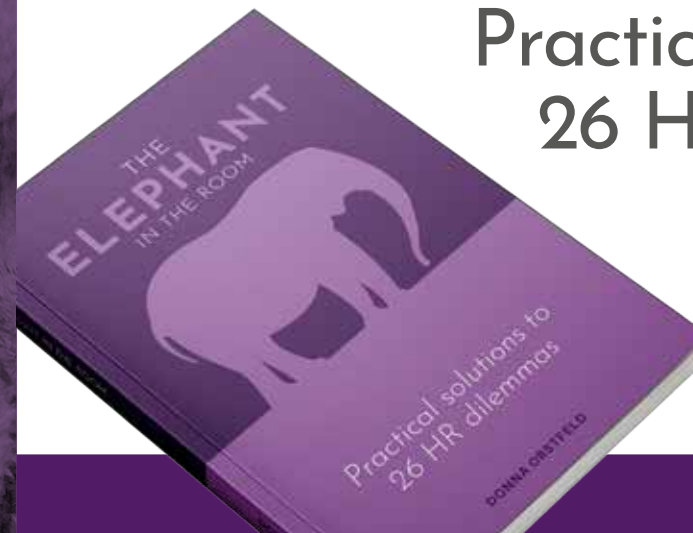
Your first hire may need to be the person who gives you back the time to run your business properly.

“People don’t make
you feel good or bad,
we do that all by
ourselves.”

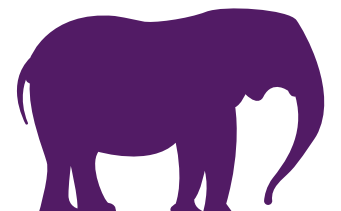
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Why HR and finance make better decisions together



Samantha Cohen
Founder & CEO, SJC Finance Team

When people think about finance and HR, they often see two very different functions. Finance focuses on numbers, budgets and profitability. HR focuses on people, culture and performance. In reality, they work best together.

A new employee brings salary, National Insurance, pension contributions, equipment, training, holiday pay and management time. The true cost is often much higher than expected.

Before recruiting, it is worth asking whether that capability needs to sit permanently within the business.

We regularly work with businesses that assume their next hire should be a finance manager or financial controller. After modelling the costs, they realise they can access a wider range of expertise through an outsourced finance team, often for less than employing a single individual. The money saved can then be invested in revenue-generating roles or other strategic priorities.

HR understands the skills the organisation needs. Finance understands the cost of acquiring them. Together they help businesses recruit with confidence rather than reacting to immediate pressures.

Reward should be sustainable, not reactive

Pay reviews are rarely straightforward. Employees expect salaries to reflect

performance, inflation and market conditions. Business owners need to balance those expectations with profitability and cash flow.

When finance and HR work together, those conversations become far more constructive.

Finance can model the long-term affordability of different reward options, while HR understands what employees genuinely value. Sometimes that may be a salary increase. In other cases, flexible working, additional holiday, enhanced benefits or career development may deliver greater impact without placing unnecessary pressure on the business.

The best reward strategies remain sustainable in both good years and more challenging ones.

The real cost of losing good people

Replacing experienced employees is expensive. Recruitment fees, onboarding, training, lost productivity and the impact on customers all carry a financial cost that is often underestimated.

Finance can quantify the cost of turnover, while HR can identify why

employees are leaving. By combining those insights, businesses can make informed decisions about investing in retention rather than repeatedly funding recruitment.

Retention is not just an HR issue, it is a commercial one.

Planning for growth

A business may be winning new clients, launching new services or expanding into new markets, but none of those ambitions succeed without the right people in place at the right time.

One growing business came to us initially for day-to-day finance support. As the business expanded, that relationship evolved to include payroll, management reporting and strategic financial advice. With clearer financial information and regular forecasting, the leadership team gained the confidence to make recruitment and investment decisions based on evidence rather than instinct.

Finance provides the numbers and HR provides the people strategy. Together they create a realistic roadmap for sustainable growth.

Turning information into better decisions

Many businesses have access to plenty of data but very little insight.

A common example is a business experiencing strong sales growth, but with profitability failing to keep pace. Looking at management accounts alongside workforce data may reveal that persistent vacancies are driving

overtime and temporary staffing costs. By bringing HR and finance together, businesses can recruit more strategically, reduce unnecessary costs and improve both employee wellbeing and profitability.

This is the value of bringing financial and people data together. It helps answer questions such as:

- Which departments generate the greatest return?
- How much does employee turnover cost?
- Are labour costs increasing faster than revenue?
- Is sickness absence affecting profitability?
- Where should future recruitment be focused?

These are not finance questions or HR questions. They are business questions.

A partnership that supports better businesses

For many SMEs, employing a Finance Director, Financial Controller, payroll specialist and management accountant simply is not practical.

That does not mean they should miss out on strategic financial advice.

An outsourced finance team can provide the commercial insight, reporting, forecasting and payroll expertise that growing businesses need, working alongside HR to support better decision making across the organisation.

The strongest businesses recognise that every people decision is also a financial decision.

When finance and HR work together, businesses recruit more wisely, reward more sustainably, retain more talent and grow with greater confidence.

At SJC Finance Team, we support organisations across a wide range of sectors and at every stage of growth. Our outsourced finance service is tailored to each client's needs, giving businesses access to experienced financial expertise without the cost and commitment of hiring in-house. Like DOHR, we believe that great businesses are built by great people, supported by the right expertise and trusted partnerships.

Samantha founded SJC Finance Team 14 years ago, starting at her kitchen table using the knowledge she had gained from her involvement with other businesses. She is passionate about helping her clients succeed and loves getting involved in all aspects of their businesses, from listening to their challenges, to attending management meetings and overseeing their accounts. SJC Finance Team is built on strong personal connections with clients and a commitment to going the extra mile.

[SJCfinteam.com](https://www.sjcfinteam.com)

The Stress Vaccine

How compassionate leaders **thrive** under pressure



Are you juggling multiple responsibilities and conflicting priorities? Are you managing tricky team dynamics? Are you striving to achieve some work-life balance while being the best leader you can be?



Dr Natalie Isaia
 Clinical Psychologist and CEO/
 Founder of Empresa Psychology

If you've answered yes to any of the above questions, these are likely to be sources of stress for you. Your stress vaccine contains two ingredients:

Compassionate Leadership
 a strategy that not only boosts productivity and performance in your team but also reduces stress.

Psychological Safety
 a culture enabled by Compassionate Leadership, that creates a healthier, more supportive environment whilst reducing leader stress.

Psychological safety – a key ingredient

Professor Amy Edmonson is a Harvard Business School professor and a leading expert on Psychological Safety in the workplace. She has undertaken decades of research on this concept.

Amy reminds us to consider what Psychological Safety is NOT. Here is the most important point from the list:

It is not just being nice

Both Compassionate Leadership and Psychological Safety foster accountability. They represent the art of finding the balance between

empathy and support, alongside strength and courageous decision making.

In a psychologically safe workplace, employees feel safe to express their thoughts, take risks, and admit mistakes without fear of ridicule or punishment. It doesn't mean that there is free reign to be disrespectful or disruptive, or that all ideas will be taken forward. It also doesn't mean that there won't be consequences for mistakes.

A formula for productivity, performance and innovation

When Psychological Safety is absent:

- employees operate in a state of fear
- employees are unable to use their full cognitive capacity
- for leaders, this can mean dealing with more conflicts, miscommunication, and burnout.

This will never create a thriving environment because when we are operating in a state of high stress, the neurological impact on our brain reduces our ability to problem solve,

communicate, innovate, in addition to many other capabilities we want online in the workplace.

A psychologically safe workplace, on the other hand, encourages openness, problem-solving and innovation, factors that contribute to reducing overall stress for everyone.

Stress inoculation for leaders

Building a culture of Psychological Safety is hard work and takes time. But that effort will pay dividends to you as a leader. Practicing Compassionate Leadership can help alleviate leader stress in the following ways:

Stronger Team Cohesion:
 When employees feel psychologically safe, they are more engaged and self-motivated, reducing the need for constant oversight and micromanagement.

Fewer Conflicts:
 By fostering open communication and understanding, misunderstandings

and conflicts are minimised, decreasing the emotional labour required to mediate disputes. Not to mention time saved for both leaders and HR professionals!

Increased Trust & Delegation:
 When employees feel valued, they are more likely to take ownership of their work, allowing leaders to delegate effectively and avoid burnout.

Personal Fulfilment & Purpose:
 Compassionate Leadership fosters meaningful connections with team members, which can make leadership roles more rewarding and fulfilling.

Three practical steps you can take

1. Practice self-awareness

- Being compassionate is not weak – it is quite the opposite. It involves being aware of your own emotions and responses, and then being able to regulate them effectively. And that is really hard to do. My most recommended emotion regulation tools are:
- Practice labelling emotions using a feelings wheel (google 'feelings wheel' or 'emotion wheel' and find one you like). There are several reasons this is effective; one is that putting a word on an emotion activates your frontal lobe, which helps to bring your 'rational mind' back online.
- Practice breathing exercises. This is a foundational skill backed by neuroscience, which down-regulates the branch of your nervous system responsible for your fight-or-flight stress response.

2. Listen

Amy Edmonson reminded us that we need to actually listen to and act

upon what our colleagues are telling us. This can feel uncomfortable because it might require us to challenge the way we are looking at something or change the way we are doing something.

We must also listen to what we are NOT hearing – silence is an important message. Amy explains that as a leader, if you're not hearing about anything going wrong this is a sign that your organisation is not psychologically safe. Unfortunately, it does not mean that everything is going well, but rather that mistakes and issues are being hidden, which prevents you from resolving issues and improving outcomes.

3. Ask better questions

If someone in a position of power asks us whether we have any objections to a plan, it's really hard to say that we do. Make it easier for people to feed back by asking the right questions. For example:

- If you had to argue the opposite of this idea, what would you say?
- Let's take a moment to consider alternative perspectives – what are some other ways to approach this?
- What obstacles might we run into, and how can we prepare?

The ripple effect of compassionate leadership

By leading with compassion and creating an environment of Psychological Safety, you can transform not only your workplace culture but also your own experience as a leader. A thriving team supports a thriving leader, making everyone more productive, engaged, and fulfilled.

Dr Natalie Isaia – Clinical Psychologist and CEO/Founder of Empresa Psychology.

Her company delivers evidence-based performance and leadership training to teams in high-pressure professions, helping companies to improve performance, reduce burnout, and strengthen leadership without compromising wellbeing. Training targets the psychological and

neurobiological drivers of commercial issues such as disengagement and attrition, so that impacts are sustainable, not superficial. Programmes are designed to enhance existing L&D programmes and focus on practical skills that can be implemented immediately.



Scan the QR code, and book a free consultation call

empresapsychology.co.uk

Legal update

Current Statutory Rates

Family related leave rates £194.32 per week
SSP – £123.32 per week from day one of sickness absence
Redundancy pay – £751

HMRC approved mileage rates for personal vehicles from April 2026

Vehicle type	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars & vans	55p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

From 1 June 2026 the advisory electric rates for fully electric company cars will be:

- 7 pence per mile for home charging
- 15 pence per mile for public charging

Fuel change on a regular basis and therefore it is important to check [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advisory fuel rates](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advisory-fuel-rates) for the most up to date details.

Employment Rights Act 2025

The implementation of the Employment Rights Act continues and the timeline for the next set of changes is as follows:

Date	Change
1 October 2026	Tribunal claim time limits generally increase from three to six months
30 October 2026	Duty to take ALL reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment
	New protection against third-party harassment
	New duty to inform workers about their right to join a trade union
	Stronger workplace access and recognition rights for trade unions
	Stronger protections for trade union representatives and industrial action
October 2026	Adult Social Care Negotiating Body and public-sector outsourcing measures
December 2026	Seafarer protection regulations
By the end of 2026	Strengthened tipping laws
1 January 2027	Ordinary unfair dismissal qualifying period reduces to six months (from 24 months)
	Unfair dismissal compensatory award cap removed
January 2027	Stronger restrictions on fire and rehire

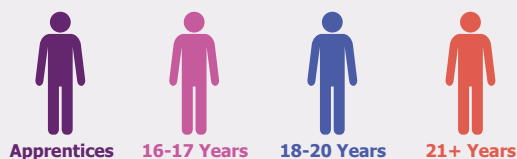
For assistance with any of the issues raised above, contact a member of the team on support@dohr.co.uk



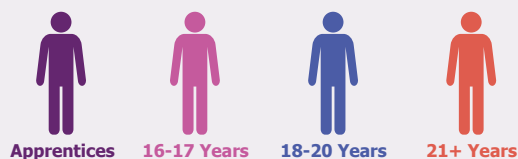
“We make choices based on what we have experienced and that seriously affects how we perceive the world.”

Nigel Risner
The Chief Zoo Keeper

National Minimum / Living Wage

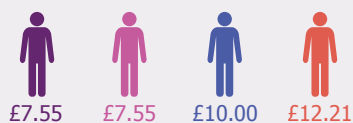


01.04.25



01.04.26

Hourly Rate



Annual Salary

per hours per week

