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Business News Northern Ireland

Welcome to our round-up of the latest business news for our clients. Please contact us if you want to talk about how these updates affect your business. We are here to support you!

Helping your employees through the cost-of-living crisis

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has put together some practical information for employers to support their employees through the cost-of-living crisis.

Against a backdrop of soaring prices for food, energy and other essential goods and services, many employers in the UK are asking what they can do to support their people's financial wellbeing.

Several UK employers are generously topping up pay packets with a cost-of-living payment. The CIPD's summer Labour Market Outlook for 2022 finds that 15% of organisations have paid, or are planning to pay, such a payment to some or all their workers, while a further 15% have the matter under review. Private sector firms are most likely to have paid this bonus (18%) - especially those in the primary and utilities (30%), financial services (26%), and construction (25%) sectors.



Even if you cannot afford to offer inflation-beating pay rises, there is still a lot you can do to ease the stress and anxiety your workforce is facing. The CIPD say that now is the time to review your financial wellbeing policies and benefits packages to make sure they are working as hard as they can – especially for those that are most likely to be struggling to make ends meet.

They suggest the following things to consider:

- Review your reward strategy – if you can afford to offer a cost-of-living bonus, make sure it doesn't inadvertently do more harm than good for those who claim Universal Credit or Tax Credits.

- Review your financial wellbeing policy – do your people know what help is on offer and how to get it?
- Review your benefits package – is it working hard enough for those most in need? Again, does everyone know what’s on offer and how to access it?
- Train your managers – an empathetic and approachable management style can help normalise conversations about money, and let employees seek the help they need.
- Examine the CIPD Reward management survey, which looks at the various ways employers are helping with financial wellbeing and tackling in-work poverty.

For the full guidance and example case studies see: [Supporting employees through the cost-of-living crisis | CIPD](#)

Employment status and employment rights

Employment status affects everyone who works. Pay, leave and working conditions can all depend on employment status. People with different employment statuses have different rights set out in law. The rights are designed to protect individuals. Most of the rights are compulsory, and usually cannot be signed away. The UK Government has recently issued new guidance.

The guidance complements the existing GOV.UK Employment status guidance, and provides practical advice and examples on:

- Employment status and how it determines the employment rights individuals are entitled to and for which employers are responsible.
- Factors determining an individual’s employment status.
- Special circumstances and recent developments in the labour market.
- How employment status should be determined for different sectors.
- Where to go for further information.

There are 2 additional pieces of guidance for:

- [Individuals](#), to help them understand their employment status so that they know their rights, can have informed discussions with their employer about them, and can take steps to claim them and have them enforced where necessary.
- [Employers or engagers](#), to help them understand individuals’ employment status so they comply with the law, helping ensure individuals receive the rights they are entitled to and avoid unnecessary disputes and associated costs.

See: [Employment status and employment rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Energy Management - BS ISO 50005

The British Standards Institution (BSI), in conjunction with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Race to Zero campaign, are supplying 100,000 free copies of BS ISO 50005.

The ISO 50005 standard provides SMEs with a means to develop a practical approach to energy management to reduce energy consumption, energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions. Using a phased approach enables quick wins to be achieved in reducing energy usage and allows businesses to build upon these successes over time.

See: [BS ISO 50005:2021 | BSI \(bsigroup.com\)](https://www.bsigroup.com/BS-ISO-50005-2021)

Companies House webinars available as recordings

Companies House have recordings of webinar presentations that you can watch whenever suits your schedule. The webinars cover a range of topics, including:

- Starting a limited company and your responsibilities to Companies House and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).
- How intellectual property, such as patents, trademarks and copyrights can affect your business.
- Guidance on starting a community interest company (CIC).
- How to register company mortgages and other charges at Companies House.
- How to restore a company to the register.

Click on the links below to view the recordings:

- [Support to guide you on your business journey](#)
- [Choosing the right legal structure for your business](#)
- [Directors' responsibilities - everything you've asked about running a limited company](#)
- [Directors' responsibilities - data protection - what you need to know and where to start, a webinar by the ICO](#)
- [Directors' responsibilities - what questions are most frequently asked about starting a company?](#)
- [Directors' responsibilities - your accounts and how to avoid a late filing penalty](#)
- [Companies House: Starting and running a limited company](#)
- [Director's responsibilities: webinar 5](#)
- [Director's responsibilities: webinar 4](#)
- [Director's responsibilities: webinar 3](#)
- [Directors' responsibilities: webinar 2](#)

- [Directors' responsibilities: webinar 1](#)
- [Companies House and the Intellectual Property Office: Starting a company and your IP](#)
- [Community interest companies: all you need to know about submitting a successful CIC application](#)
- [Community interest company or charity, do you know the difference?](#)
- [Companies House: Online charges and mortgages](#)
- [Companies House and Acas: Managing sickness absence](#)

The new 'Register of Overseas Entities' is live

The new Register of Overseas Entities is held by Companies House and requires overseas entities that own land or property in the UK to declare their beneficial owners and/or managing officers. There will be sanctions for those who do not comply, including restrictions on buying, selling, transferring, leasing or charging their land or property in the UK.

Overseas entities who want to buy, sell or transfer property or land in the UK must register with Companies House and tell them who their registrable beneficial owners or managing officers are.

Overseas entities who already own or lease land or property in the UK will also need to register with Companies House and tell them who their registrable beneficial owners or managing officers are by 31 January 2023.

This applies to overseas entities who bought property or land on or after:

- 1 January 1999 in England and Wales
- 8 December 2014 in Scotland

Overseas entities only need to register property or land bought in Northern Ireland on or after 1 August 2022. Entities that disposed of property or land after 28 February 2022 will also need to give details of those dispositions.

See: [The new Register of Overseas Entities is live - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Companies House Counter Services will not be re-opening

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Companies House office in London and the public counters in Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh were closed.

As Companies House continues to transform its services to provide a fully digital experience, it has been decided that its public counters will not re-open.

See: [Companies House London office and counter services will not be re-opening - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

iX Challenge: Healthy Ageing Innovation Accelerator Competition

The Healthy Ageing market is one of the fastest growing markets in the world. The market in China is the largest geographically-defined opportunity. The Accelerator Programme includes a de-risking pathway to enter this market and make UK businesses competitive, as well as growth and export-ready.

The Innovation Exchange Program is working alongside Oxford Innovation Advice and the UK National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA), to find innovative companies that are ambitious to grow their business. They seek innovators with new product or service ideas that can support us to stay healthy and active, and help us to remain mobile and connected as we age. They will be providing free expert assistance to participants, particularly focussing on the growing market opportunities in China.

The free NICA Healthy Ageing Accelerator programme is targeted at high growth potential companies of any size and from any part of the UK. It will provide expert support to help companies maximise their business growth, including assisting participants to explore the fast-growing China Market. Successful applicants will benefit from 9 weeks of tailored fully funded support from NICA, Oxford Innovation Advice and Innovate UK KTN experts.

These activities will be funded through the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Fund for International Collaboration (FIC), delivered by Innovate UK.

See: [iX Challenge: Healthy Ageing Innovation Accelerator Competition - Innovate UK KTN \(ktn-uk.org\)](https://www.ktn-uk.org/ix-challenge-healthy-ageing-innovation-accelerator-competition)

UK Privacy Enhancing Technologies Challenge Prize

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is working with the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation to run a Privacy Enhancing Technologies Challenge. This is part of an aligned programme with the US National Science Foundation, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

This challenge aims to accelerate the development and adoption of privacy-preserving federated learning approaches and build trust in their adoption.

To achieve this, participants are asked to develop approaches that:

- Leverage a combination of input and output privacy techniques.
- Deliver strong privacy guarantees against a set of common threats and privacy attacks.
- Develop privacy technologies that are capable of supporting machine learning tasks in one or two predefined use cases in the financial crime and public health sectors.

The challenge is split into 3 phases:

- Phase 1: Your approach. You will develop a technical white paper which will describe your proposed approach.
- Phase 2: Solution development. If successful in phase 1, you will be invited to develop your solution.
- Phase 3: Testing. The top solutions will be tested by dedicated Red Teams (ethical hackers).

Up to £700,000 is available in funding across the three phases of the competition.

Applicants successful in Phase 1 and invited to Phase 2 will be able to apply for up to £50,000 to develop their solutions. Up to 10 awards of £10,000 will also be given to the highest scoring projects from Phase 1. The £10,000 can only be used to support the growth of your business and the costs associated with this must be evidenced.

The competition closes on 19 September 2022.

See: [Competition overview - UK Privacy Enhancing Technologies Challenge Prize - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk)

Innovate UK Smart Grants – Latest round of funding

Up to £25 million is available for disruptive research and development (R&D) innovations that can significantly impact the UK economy.

All proposals must be business-focused, with deliverable, realistic and adequately resourced plans to achieve return on investment, growth and market share following project completion.

Applications can come from any area of technology and be applied to any part of the economy, such as, but not exclusively:

- Net-zero
- The arts
- Design and media

This [round of Smart grants](#) reflects the importance of obtaining economic benefits from public funding, and the potential for successful commercialisation, growth and exports.

To be in the scope, your proposal must demonstrate:

- A game-changing, innovative and disruptive idea that will lead to new products, processes or services.
- An idea that is significantly ahead of others in the field, set for rapid commercialisation.

- Clear potential to positively impact the UK's position, productivity and competitiveness within the global economy.

Projects can be across a variety of technologies, markets and research categories, including:

- Feasibility projects
- Industrial research projects
- Experimental development projects

Your application must include at least one micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) as the lead or collaborative grant claiming partner.

Projects must start by 1 May 2023 and end by 30 April 2026, and follow specific rules dependent on their duration.

See: [Competition overview - Innovate UK Smart Grants: July 2022 - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk)

Design Foundations 2022 competition

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has launched the Design Foundations July 2022 funding competition. This will invest up to £2 million in early-stage innovation projects that use people and planet-centred design processes and expertise.

The competition aims to help businesses develop new ideas that will deliver benefits for people and the planet, aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. These can be for new or significantly improved products, services, places or business models.

The competition is for eligible organisations that want to test and improve the customer experience, social and environmental benefits of their early-stage ideas, as well as generate new ideas.

Applications are encouraged from organisations that have not previously used people and planet-centred design processes or expertise. The competition closes on 31 August 2022.

See: [Competition overview - Design Foundations July 2022 - Innovation Funding Service \(apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk\)](https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk)

Sales Academy Programme for Fermanagh and Omagh

The Sales Academy forms part of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) Innovating Business Growth Programme.

This fully-funded programme offers support to businesses located within the FODC area that have been trading for more than 12 months, employ less than 50 people and demonstrate real potential for job creation.

Delegates will receive one-to-one bespoke mentoring with an experienced consultant who is allocated based on the area of support needed.

They will also have access to skills development workshops which cover different topics each session.

See: [Sales Academy Programme – Fermanagh & Omagh District Council \(fermanaghomagah.com\)](https://fermanaghomagah.com)

Supply Chain Management webinar

Supply chain management is managing the flow of goods and services from the manufacturing of the product right through to the customer or end user. For this process to work successfully, it requires an organisation to have a network of suppliers to successfully move the product through each stage.

Invest Northern Ireland's Supply Chain Management webinar will highlight how you can take action to make your supply chain more resilient and how you can work to develop your supply chain function, so it delivers value and reduces costs.

This free webinar is being held on Thursday 18 August 2022, 2pm-3pm.

You will gain an understanding of:

- What supply chain management is.
- The background of current supply chain problems.
- What the main components are.
- How supply chain development leads to real business rewards.
- How to implement.
- What the next steps are.
- Who to contact.

See: [Supply Chain Management webinar \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)

NI Screen funding calls

Northern Ireland Screen is the national screen agency for Northern Ireland, committed to maximising the economic, cultural and educational value of the screen industries for the benefit of Northern Ireland. NI Screen runs funding schemes throughout the year, and three schemes are currently open for applications.

[Creative Animation Scheme](#)

The Creative Animation Scheme is designed to develop Northern Ireland resident junior creators/animators through the production of animated short films. The scheme provides junior-level creators/animators with the opportunity to develop their own ideas with support from established animation companies.

The scheme is supported via funding from the Screen Fund and British Film Institute (BFI) Network. NI Screen will support the production of up to two animated short films through funding awarded in the financial year 2022-23.

Northern Ireland-based production companies can make an application for a full budget to a maximum of £40,000.

Applications, including supporting documentation, must be received by Friday 19 August 2022.

Feature Documentary Development Application Call

This funding is intended to support the development of feature documentaries with the potential to appeal to an international audience that will deliver unique visions and voices on universal stories from Northern Ireland resident filmmakers.

Northern Ireland-based production companies can apply for up to a maximum of £7,500 based on a budget of £10,000.

Pre-application meetings with NI Screen's Head of Production are strongly encouraged, as is early application.

Applications, including supporting documentation, must be received by Friday 19 August 2022.

Canada-Northern Ireland Co-development Incentive for Audio-visual Projects

This funding is for the co-development of screen-based projects between Canadian and Northern Ireland producers. It is intended for television projects in the following genres: drama, documentary, animation, entertainment or education, or digital media content made for other platforms, including web series, video games, transmedia projects, and virtual or augmented reality.

The amount available for this year will be CAD\$200,000 (£117,000), with half the funds contributed by each funding organisation. The total maximum contribution for each project funded through the incentive will be CAD\$50,000 (£29,250).

Producers interested in applying to receive funding can apply until Wednesday 31 August 2022.

See: [Canada / Northern Ireland Co-Development Fund - Northern Ireland Screen](#)

Derry and Strabane Job Fair

Derry City & Strabane District Council is hosting a job fair, supported by the Department for Communities, on Thursday 22 September 2022, from 11:00 to 15:00 at the Millennium Forum.

Employers are encouraged to register their interest in exhibiting at this free event if they are recruiting on or around the date of the event.

See: [Derry and Strabane Job Fair \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)