14 July 2025

# BUSINESS NEWS – Round up

**Welcome to our weekly round up of the latest business news for our clients. Please do contact Cognitor Accountancy to talk with us about how these updates may affect your business. We are here to support you!**

## Where Did the Money Go?



If you've ever reached the end of a busy month wondering where your profits have gone, you're not alone. For many small business owners, cash seems to disappear faster than it arrives.

While sales are important, its cash flow – the money coming in and going out – that keeps your business alive. So, asking "Where did the money go?" can be your key to regaining control of your cash.

### Where to Start

Effective cash management starts with visibility. Without a clear understanding of where your money is going, it's difficult to:

- Spot wasteful or unnecessary costs
- Plan for tax payments or seasonal dips
- Invest with confidence in equipment or opportunities to grow
- Avoid last-minute scrambles to cover payroll or bills

In short, if you can't track it, you can't manage it.

### Common Money Drains

Business owners are often surprised by how much they spend on the "small stuff" - subscriptions, software licenses, office supplies, travel costs, or energy bills. These often fly under the radar but add up quickly. Similarly, inconsistent pricing, uncollected invoices, or excess stock can quietly eat away at your margins.

## What You Can Do

1. **Review Your Spending Monthly**: Make time each month to review your bank statements and P&L reports. Look for patterns, unexpected charges, and trends in your expenses. This will make it easier to see where adjustments can be made to reduce spending.

2. **Use Cash Flow Tools**: Accounting software or spreadsheets can make a huge difference. A simple Excel cash flow template can allow you to forecast, monitor, and adjust in real time.

3. **Separate Personal and Business Finances**: Mixing the two creates confusion and risk. Keeping them separate makes your cash situation easier to monitor.

4. **Set Spending Limits**: Give yourself boundaries, capping monthly spend in certain areas. Being disciplined will help you to avoid overspending.

5. **Revisit Your Pricing**: If your costs have increased but your prices haven't, your margins may be suffering. Reviewing your pricing structure will help you to make sure your income is keeping pace with your expenses.

## The Takeaway

Asking "Where did the money go?" isn't a sign of failure - it's a sign that you're ready to take control. By building better awareness of how money flows through your business, you'll be better placed to plan, save, and grow.

Fancy taking this a step further? Why not **get in touch** and we would be happy to help you!

# Is it Too Hot or Cold to Work? What Employers Need to Know



With the UK experiencing more frequent extremes in temperature - both hot and cold - it's worth brushing up on what the law says about working conditions, and what you can do to keep your team comfortable and safe.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides a useful guide that can help you make sure you're one step ahead of the law.

## Is there a maximum workplace temperature?

You might be surprised to learn there's no legal upper limit when it comes to how hot a workplace can be. That's because some working environments - like bakeries or foundries - naturally reach high temperatures due to the nature of the job.

However, that doesn't mean employers can ignore the heat. Under health and safety law, you must:

- Keep workplace temperatures at a comfortable level
- Provide clean and fresh air

### And the minimum?

For indoor workplaces, the rules are a little clearer:

- The temperature should be at least 16°C
- If the work involves 'rigorous physical effort,' it can be as low as 13°C

### Outdoor working comes with extra risk

Working outdoors in hot (or cold) environments can quickly affect your employees' health. There can be long-term health effects too, such as skin cancer. And the weather can affect an employee's ability to handle machinery or other tasks safely.

It's therefore important to make sure you have measures in place to protect those who may be working outdoors.

### If your business involves extreme temperatures

In some sectors, extreme temperatures are part of the job. If this applies to your business, then you would need to consider things like heat stress, dehydration or cold stress.

### Final thoughts

There may be no fixed maximum temperature at work, but the key principle is that employees should not be working in conditions that put their health at risk. If your team is too hot or cold, it's worth reviewing what you can do to help. Sometimes, just making a few small adjustments can make a real difference.

See: https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/index.htm

## Employment Rights Bill: New Measures Announced for NDAs and Bereavement Leave for Pregnancy Loss



The Employment Rights Bill is currently making its way through Parliament, and some important amendments have been announced that employers will want to be aware of.

These two updates relate to how employers handle issues of harassment and pregnancy loss.

### 1. Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs): New Restrictions on Use

The Bill includes a proposal to ban the use of NDAs that prevent employees from speaking out about harassment, including sexual harassment and workplace discrimination. These clauses, which can often be found in settlement agreements, will no longer be enforceable where their purpose is to stop someone from discussing such experiences.

Witnesses will also be protected – meaning that individuals who have seen or supported someone through harassment can speak up without risk of breaching confidentiality.

This means that where NDAs have been used to silence or discourage people from speaking about an allegation of harassment or discrimination, that approach will no longer be supported by law.

### 2. Bereavement Leave for Pregnancy Loss: A New Legal Right

Another key amendment introduces a new right to bereavement leave for families affected by a pregnancy loss before 24 weeks.

Currently, statutory Parental Bereavement Leave only applies where parents lose a child under 18 or experience stillbirth after pregnancy has reached 24 weeks. This change recognises that grief doesn't depend on how far along a pregnancy was.

### What to consider:

Employers will need to offer protected time off for pregnancy loss from day one of employment, once the Bill becomes law.

This is a good opportunity to review your bereavement and sickness policies, and make sure they reflect the needs of employees going through these difficult experiences.

Many businesses have already taken steps to build more compassionate policies in this area, and this change will help ensure greater consistency and clarity across the board.

### Wider context: The Plan for Change

These proposals sit alongside wider measures in the Bill aimed at improving job security and working conditions. The government has said these reforms are intended to support both workers and businesses, helping employers build strong, sustainable teams while protecting people through major life events.

We'd recommend that you continue to monitor developments as the Bill progresses through Parliament. This will allow you to be ready with your policies and communications with staff.

To review more information on the NDAs measure, see here. To review more information on the measure for bereavement leave, see here.

## Could Reading More Help Your Business?

The Department for Education has announced a National Year of Reading, launching in January 2026, in a bid to reverse the steady decline in reading for pleasure among young people.



According to a survey carried out by the National Literacy Trust, just 1 in 3 of children and young people aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2025. Less than 1 in 5 said they used their free time to read daily. This is the lowest these statistics have been in 20 years.

The National Year of Reading campaign aims to reignite a reading culture by involving parents, schools, libraries, and businesses. While the initiative is focused on children and families, there could be wider benefits.

Reading regularly for pleasure has been shown to reduce stress and can improve decision-making. Considering the multiple responsibilities you juggle, reading may not only lessen your stress levels but also freshen your approach when it comes to work.

Books can also give you new ideas - whether it's a biography that reshapes how you think about leadership, or a business title that gives you some new marketing strategies.

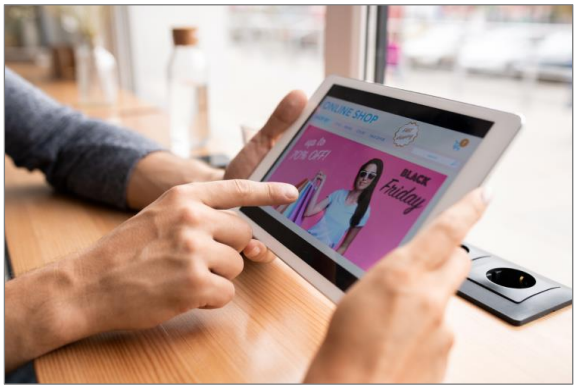
Reading for pleasure is also linked with stronger writing skills. Being a more confident and a clearer communicator, whether in an email or a client pitch, could benefit you in your interactions with customers and suppliers. A culture of reading within your team could similarly have a positive effect on how your staff engage with customers and each other.

There are community-level benefits too. A more literate population supports a stronger workforce. Supporting reading initiatives - by partnering with schools, donating books, or perhaps encouraging employees to read with their children - could play a part in helping to build the foundations of a more skilled and confident workforce in the long term.

The National Year of Reading presents a timely reminder: reading is not just for classrooms and libraries. It can be a practical and powerful tool in your personal growth and in developing your business.

See: [https://literacytrust.org.uk/news/parents-urged-to-read-more-to-boost-childrens-life-chances/](https://literacytrust.org.uk/news/parents-urged-to-read-more-to-boost-childrens-life-chances/)

## ICO Seeks Views on New, Privacy-Friendly Approach to Online Advertising




The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has launched a call for views that could shape the future of online advertising - and potentially offer businesses a way to maintain revenue without compromising user privacy.

The proposals relate to how the ICO enforces regulation 6 of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR). This is the rule that currently requires websites to get user consent before storing or accessing information that is used for deploying online advertising technologies.

### Exploring Alternatives

The ICO is encouraging feedback on a new risk-based enforcement approach that would allow online advertising to be served to users who haven't given consent, where the risk to their privacy is low.

Importantly, the regulator is not stepping back from requiring consent where personal data is involved in ad targeting. That principle still stands firm. But the aim is to help businesses explore new models that respect users' choices while still generating income.

The issue with online advertising is that it typically involves considerable processing of personal information to identify and deliver behavioural advertising. However, the ICO takes the view that this amount of processing may not be necessary.

Stephen Almond, the ICO's Director of Regulatory Risk, put it simply: "Online advertising doesn't have to come at the expense of privacy… Our role isn't to dictate how that's done – it's to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers and open the door to responsible innovation."

### Updated Guidance on Cookies and Similar Technologies

Alongside this, the ICO has also published a revised consultation on its Storage and Access Technologies (SATs) guidance. This reflects changes introduced by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, which now allows consent-free use of cookies for certain low-risk activities - such as gathering anonymous data to improve site performance.

### What Businesses Should Consider

If your business runs a website, this could simplify things for you, particularly where you might only use cookies for analytics or testing purposes.

If you're involved in online advertising, digital publishing, or operate a website that uses cookies, this may be a good time to review your current setup – could low-risk, privacy-friendly alternatives work for your business?

The ICO is also commissioning more user research to better understand public attitudes around online tracking and consent.

### Key Dates

- The consultation on the ICO's approach to regulating online advertising will close on 29 August 2025.
- The SATs guidance consultation closes on 26 September 2025.
- These consultations will feed into the ICO's final guidance and a formal statement due in early 2026.

See: https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/media-centre/news-and-blogs/2025/07/ico-opens-door-to-privacy-first-advertising-models-with-proposed-new-enforcement-approach/

## Pension Reforms: What Can You Do to Prepare?

The Government's new Pension Schemes Bill, currently before Parliament, introduces wide-reaching reforms aimed at improving outcomes for pension savers. These changes will not only affect how pensions are administered but also impact scheme selection, cost management, and employee engagement over the long term.

Figures released last week suggest that the average worker on an average salary saving into a pension pot over their working life could benefit by up to £29,000 when they retire.



Here are two of the measures that could particularly affect small employers.

### 1. Automatic Consolidation of Small Pension Pots

Small pension pots under £1,000, often created when employees change jobs, will now be automatically consolidated into large, authorised schemes that have been certified as delivering good value.

This change will reduce the administrative work involved in holding and reporting on multiple inactive pots. This could have an indirect benefit to employers too.

## 2. Schemes Will Need to Prove They Are Value for Money

Pension schemes will need to meet new regulatory standards to prove they offer long-term value, not just low charges. This will help protect savers from getting stuck in underperforming schemes. The intention is to help employees get the best possible retirement outcomes.

As an employer, you will need to make sure the default pension scheme you use is meeting these standards. Failing to do so will run the risk of being required to switch schemes.

In addition, a poorly performing scheme could affect the value of the benefits package you offer and might lead to losing existing or potential employees.

## What Can You Do to Prepare?

- It may be worth speaking to your pension adviser so that they can provide you with specific advice on the pension scheme you use and its value.
- As the value-for-money requirements become clear, review your pension provider to ensure they're on course to meet the requirements.
- Employees may have questions about how the changes may affect their pension, so be ready to communicate with them early and provide support where needed.
- These changes may create an opportunity to re-evaluate how your workplace pension supports retention and financial security for your workforce.

By staying ahead of these changes now, you can ensure your business continues to provide high-quality, compliant pension arrangements that support your employees' long-term financial wellbeing.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/workers-in-line-for-29000-boost-thanks-to-landmark-pensions-bill

**Please do contact us if you would like to talk about any of the articles. We are here to support you and your business!**

*Written 10 July 2025*