

Introduction:


August 2025

The Annual Report is now available on our website, included in this newsletter are some of the key facts we highlighted including the vital fact that we have continue to have all 29 Local Authorities in membership and 119 Associate members from across the South West – this means we are able to present a strong South West voice when we all come together on matters of concern across the region. Our new Chair Cllr Bill Revans is committed to building on this collaborative working to make the South West voice much more forceful and will be meeting other Leaders in the Autumn to consider work that is currently underway to identify some key regional priorities.



This Autumn we have an exciting programme of events. A number of these have free places for our member authorities so check them out if you haven't already booked.

Coming up in December is the SW Challenge - one of our flagship events for aspiring leaders and the Challenge Cup has been won by Associate member organisations for the last three years! So please book your team and see if you can continue the winning streak. It's a fantastic scenario based event and if you haven't got enough staff members to make a team, you can still enter in an "All-comers" team if others are in the same position - get in touch and talk it through with us. And if you are a budding actor, we are always looking for role players.



Bryony Houlden
Chief Executive

In this issue:

Page No	Content:
3	Welcome new Associate Member - Cricklade Town Council
4	SW Councils 2024/25 - Key Facts
5	South West Challenge - Book your Team!!
6	HR Employment Law Timetable
10	Updated guidance on sponsoring a skilled worker
11	Spotlight on: Employment Rights Bill - Paternity Leave
12	Top Tips from HR - Managing long-term absence
14	Pensions Awareness Week
15	Learning and Development: Learning through action
17	Consultations and policy updates
18	Congratulations and news
19	Upcoming courses
20	Contact details



Welcome to our newest Associate Member!



**CRICKLADE
TOWN COUNCIL**



We're delighted to welcome Cricklade Town Council as the newest Associate Member of South West Councils.

Cricklade, known as the first town on the Thames, is a vibrant community with a proud history and a strong sense of local identity. The Council plays an active role at the heart of the town; supporting residents, championing local businesses, caring for much-loved green spaces, and helping to bring people together through events and community initiatives. Their dedication to making Cricklade a thriving and welcoming place for all perfectly reflects the values we share across the South West. We're excited to have them join our network and look forward to working alongside them, learning from their experiences, and supporting their continued efforts in strengthening community life.

Member benefits

Associate Members of South West Councils have access to a wide range of benefits, including:

- ✓ Expert advice and guidance on employment and HR matters
- ✓ Opportunities for learning and development through our training programme
- ✓ Regional networks to share best practice and collaborate with peers
- ✓ Tailored support for those complex or unexpected challenges
- ✓ Regular updates on national and regional developments affecting the public sector
- ✓ Our monthly newsletter jam-packed with information and news

Membership helps strengthen the collective voice of the South West.



2024/25 at a glance - key facts



Proud to retain all 29 South West local authorities as Members, as well as 119 Associate Members

Over 500 regional meetings, networks and events supported



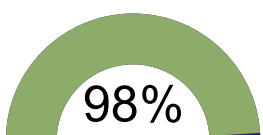
100% of mediation service users rated us excellent or good

Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment numbers increased 36% year on year



South West Challenge - 99% rating of excellent or good

Budget delivered in surplus, enabling a new Members' Benefit Fund



98% of our members agreed that South West Councils offer value for money

Ready for a Real Challenge? The SW Challenge 2025 is Calling!

🎯 What is the SW Challenge?

It's an immersive, high-energy simulation where teams step into the shoes of a fictional council's senior leadership team. Your team will tackle a range of real-world dilemmas - financial, ethical, political, social, and see how your decision-making holds up under pressure (and possibly against some time limits and curveballs).



💡 Why Take Part?

1. Deep learning by doing 🧑🎓

This isn't your average training day! Teams are plunged into a scenario-based world where critical thinking, collaboration and strategic judgement are the only way forward. It's learning that sticks, because it's hands-on, high-pressure, and highly relevant.

2. Develop leadership & resilience 📋

Participants face issues drawn from real public sector challenges, requiring them to lead with confidence, stay composed, and make tough calls. Whether someone's new to leadership or developing into a more senior role, this is the perfect pressure test (minus the actual fire!).

3. Team Dynamics - tested and strengthened 🤝

From crisis communications to tough negotiations, the challenge is packed with tasks that expose team strengths, spotlight opportunities for growth, and build trust. You'll see your team evolve in just one day.

4. Cross-functional thinking 🧠

The tasks are broad, covering policy, community relations, HR, budget planning and more, so participants are encouraged to step outside their usual day-to-day focus and think bigger. It's ideal for developing well-rounded future leaders who can see the whole picture.

⚡ Who Should Enter?

- Local authorities, public bodies and associate members with future talent to develop
- Organisations keen to invest in practical, experiential learning
- Teams looking for a meaningful stretch beyond classroom-based training

Click here for
full details
and booking.

*This is professional development with purpose.
The SW Challenge 2025 isn't about sitting
through slides or nodding politely at buzzwords.
It's a chance for your team to test the waters,
weather a few storms, and come out the other
side stronger. Expect a day of big decisions,
rapid-fire thinking, and leadership skills being put
through their paces. If your organisation is ready
to steer talent in the right direction - this is the
perfect training ground!*



**SOUTH WEST
CHALLENGE**

Pending Legislation:

April 2026	Employment Rights Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective redundancy protective award – doubling the maximum period of the protective award. • ‘Day one’ paternity leave and unpaid parental leave. • Whistleblowing protections. • Fair Work Agency established. • Statutory sick pay – removing the lower earnings limit and waiting period. • A package of trade union measures, including simplifying trade union recognition process and electronic and workplace balloting.
October 2026	Employment Rights Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending fire and rehire practices. • Regulations to establish fair pay within adult social care. • Requiring employers to take ‘all reasonable steps’ to prevent sexual harassment of their employees. • Introducing an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties and to extend protections to all work environments, including public-facing roles. • A further package of trade union measures including new rights and protections for trade union representatives, extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action and strengthening trade unions’ right of access. •
2027	Employment Rights Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender pay gap and menopause action plans (introduced on a voluntary basis in April 2026) to promote gender equality and support women’s health in the workplace. • Enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers. • Further harassment protections, specifying steps to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment to provide clearer guidance and stronger enforcement against harassment. • Creating ‘a modern framework for industrial relations’

Pending Legislation:

2027	Employment Rights Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement leave. • Ending exploitative use of zero-hours contracts. • Day-one right to protection from unfair dismissal. • Improving access to flexible working.
Date TBC	Equality (Race and Disability) Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing into law the full right to equal pay for ethnic minorities and disabled people and give them the right to bring an equal pay claim • mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting for employers with 250 or more employees
Date TBC	Bullying and Respect at Work Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a statutory definition of bullying at work • creating a new claim relating to workplace bullying that can be brought before an employment tribunal • providing for a Respect at Work Code to set minimum standards for positive and respectful work environments • giving powers to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to investigate workplaces and organisations where there is evidence of a culture of, or multiple incidents of, bullying and to take enforcement action
Date TBC	Skills England Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a new body which will bring together businesses and trade unions in a new partnership with employers and reform the apprenticeship levy
Date TBC	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Amendment) Bill	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requiring employers to take proactive steps to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace, including providing relevant training to staff

Pending Legislation:

Date TBC / 2027	Parental Bereavement Leave (Part of Employment Rights Bill)	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing leave and pay provisions for those who experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Miscarriage o Ectopic pregnancy o Molar pregnancy o Embryo transfer loss during IVF o Terminations for medical reasons
Date TBC	Paternity (bereavement) Leave	<p>Proposed legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminating the requirement for fathers and partners to have worked for at least 26 weeks before being eligible to take paternity leave where the mother, or an individual with whom a child is placed or expected to be placed for adoption, has died in the first year after birth or adoption

Recently implemented legislation:

August 2025	Apprenticeship Regulations	<p>The Apprenticeship (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 (SI 2025/599) reduce the minimum duration of the practical period of apprenticeships in England from twelve to eight months. The change applies to apprenticeships that begin on or after 1 August 2025.</p>
22 July 2025	Skilled Worker and other Sponsored immigration route	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising the skilled worker threshold from RQF3 (A-Level or equivalent) to RQF6 (graduate level) or above; • abolishing the immigration salary list and replacing it with a temporary shortage list to include roles below graduate level that could be eligible for sponsorship; and • closing social care visas from overseas (subject to transitional arrangements until 2028). • Further information is available via the following link: Sponsor a Skilled Worker - GOV.UK

Recently implemented legislation:

1 April 2025	National Minimum Wage 2025	<p>New rates from 1 April 2025 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £12.21 per hour for workers aged 21 and over • £10.00 per hour for 18- to 20-year-olds • £7.55 per hour for 16- to 17-year-olds and apprentices
6 April 2025	Neonatal Care Leave and Pay	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing parents whose baby requires neonatal care, with a right to 12 weeks' leave and pay in addition to their existing parental leave entitlement
October 2024	Prevention Duty for Sexual Harrassment	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new preventative duty for employers to stop sexual harassment before it starts is a change impacting all workplaces
July 2024	TUPE	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers can now consult with employees directly (unless employee representatives are in place) for transfers after 1st July where the business has fewer than 50 employees or where the transfer involves fewer than 10 employees
April 2024	Statutory Carers Leave	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an employee who has a dependant with long-term care needs will now be entitled to up to one week's unpaid carer's leave in any twelve-month period
April 2024	Flexible Working	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers must respond to the request within two months instead of three • employers must not reject the request until they have first consulted with the employee • employees will no longer need to set out the effects of their request on their employer and how those effects might be dealt with • employees will be able to make two requests in any twelve-month period instead of one

Recently implemented legislation:

April 2024	Paternity Leave	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employees can now take paternity leave at any time in the first year after birth or placement for adoption, rather than in the first eight weeks employees can take the leave in two separate one-week blocks, rather than having to decide between taking one week only or taking two weeks of leave in one block employees must provide 28 days' notice of the dates of their leave, with a few limited exceptions
April 2024	Redundancy	<p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regulations have been passed which extend certain redundancy protections to a wider category of employee from 6 April 2024



Updated guidance on sponsoring a skilled worker

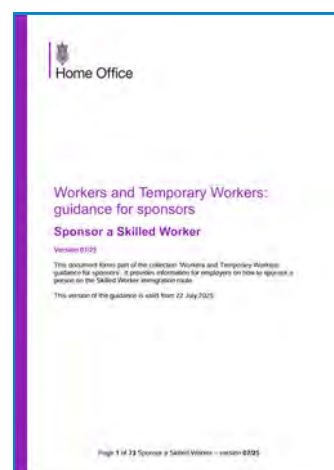
Last month, the Government published updated guidance in relation to sponsoring a skilled worker. The 'Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors' document has been updated to reflect the changes to the Immigration Rules that came in to effect on 22nd July 2025.

The key updates include:

- **Significant salary increases:** The general salary threshold for those new to the Skilled Worker route is now £41,700 (up from £38,700).
- **A higher skills threshold:** Most roles must now be at the pre-Brexit level of RQF Level 6+ (bachelor degree level).
- **A new Temporary Shortage Occupation List (TSL):** The TSL contains only medium-skilled roles at RQF Level 3 to 5 (A-level).

You can access the guidance document in full on the Gov.UK website via the following link:

[Sponsor a Skilled Worker - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsor-a-skilled-worker)



Spotlight on: Employment Rights Bill*

What is the current status of the Employment Rights Bill?

Currently the Employment Rights Bill is still going through the various stages of consultation and debate in parliament. According to the Government's roadmap published in July 2025, different parts of the Bill will be passed over the next few years, with some key changes from April 2026.

Do employers need to start updating their HR policies and procedures?

At this moment in time, employers do not need to make any changes to their current HR policies and procedures. South West Councils are closely monitoring the progress of the Bill and as soon as any relevant parts of the Bill are passed then we will share this with our members. We will also update our relevant template HR policies for our members to use.

How can employers start to prepare for the changes?

Although the Bill hasn't been passed yet, it is advisable that employers start to familiarise themselves with the proposed changes. As such, over the next few months we are sharing some useful information which is available on the Government website regarding each of the different areas where changes are proposed. It should be noted that at the moment, this information is based on proposals and still subject to change.

Employment Rights Bill Spotlight: **Paternity Leave**

What is the current policy / legal framework?

Currently an employee must work for their employer for 26 weeks before they are eligible for Paternity Leave.

How will it work?

The Employment Rights Bill will remove the requirement to complete continuity of service requirements enabling employees to give notice of their intention to take Paternity Leave from their first day in a new job.

When is the policy proposed to be implemented?

According to the road map published in July 2025, the change to Paternity Leave is proposed to take effect in April 2026.

What is the intent of the new policy?

The Employment Rights Bill will remove the requirement for employees to have worked with their employer for 26 weeks to take Paternity Leave.

The notice periods remain unchanged, with Paternity Leave requiring 15 weeks' notice before the expected week of childbirth, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

The bill will also remove the restriction on taking Paternity Leave after taking Shared Parental Leave as currently, when Shared Parental Leave is taken, fathers or partners lose their right to take any Paternity Leave they have not already taken.

Further information can be found here:
Employment Rights Bill: factsheets - GOV.UK

Managing long-term absence

It is evitable that employees are going to have periods of sickness absence from time to time, and occasionally that absence may become long term (long term absence is normally regarded as continuous absence of 4 or more weeks). Long periods of absence can have significant impacts for organisations and can feel daunting to manage.

To help you, here are South West Councils top 5 tips for dealing with long term sickness absence:



1 Have an Absence Management Policy

Having a clear policy which outlines how you will effectively manage employees if they are off long-term sick ensures that employees and managers both understand their roles and responsibilities, as well as the procedure that will be followed. This also ensures that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

2 Manage the absence

Even when you know that an employee is going to be off sick on a long-term basis it's advisable to maintain regularly contact with them. Maintaining frequent contact ensures that you keep up to date with how the employee is feeling, any support they need etc. It will also help you gauge if, and when, the employee is likely to be fit to return to work

3 Seek occupational health advice

Where relevant, you may want to consider referring the employee to an Occupational Health provider for a work specific medical assessment. Following an assessment, an occupational health advisor will be able to provide you with advice and guidance such as when the employee is likely to be fit to return to work, what support they might need, and what they will be capable of doing when they return.

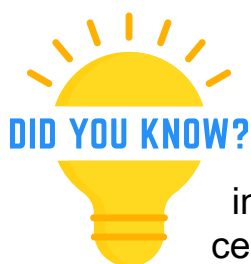
4 Consider reasonable adjustments

If an employee is deemed to have a disability, then by law you will need to consider making reasonable adjustments to assist the employee in being able to return to work. Reasonable adjustments will vary and may include purchasing specific pieces of equipment, changing the employees working pattern or temporarily redeploying the employee to a more suitable post.

5 Consider termination on ill-health grounds

If you have considered all options but there are still no signs of the employee being fit to return to work within a reasonable timeframe, you may be left with no other option but to consider ending their employment due to ill health. It's advisable to always seek advice if you find yourself in this situation.

If you require any support and guidance with managing long or short-term sickness absence, then don't hesitate to contact a member of our HR Services team on 01823 425200.



DID YOU KNOW?

..... back in 2022, changes were made to fit notes which meant that in addition to doctors, other healthcare professionals became eligible to certify and issue fit notes. The full list of healthcare professionals named in legislation are:

- registered nurses
- occupational therapists
- pharmacists
- physiotherapists
- doctors

A healthcare professional is only able to issue a fit note if they have been treating the employee under NHS Services and where they have relevant training and knowledge to be able to assess the person's fitness to work. Fit notes cannot be issued via over-the-counter services as fit notes are not part of the NHS services which community pharmacies provide.

At South West Councils, we offer a range of in-house development courses specifically for HR specialists and officers with line management responsibilities. Following discussions with you regarding your requirements, we provide you with a training proposal which includes suggestions for content, duration and delivery methods. These sessions can be delivered as repeated sessions for courses intended for your full workforce or large numbers or one-off sessions for a small group of officers.

Managing Absence Capability

This half day event delivers an overview of effective management of staff absences:

- Cost and impact of staff absence
- Legislative framework
- ACAS code of Practice
- Applying organisational policy
- Improving attendance
- Return to work meetings
- Sources of support

CLICK HERE FOR ALL HR AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN-HOUSE COURSES

A friend recently complained.....



“By the time I retire, the State Pension age will be 100 and I’ll never be able to afford to retire!”

It’s certainly widely accepted nowadays that whenever possible we should plan ahead and save for our retirement if we want to be able to stop working and live comfortably in our later years. Fortunately, the State Pension Age isn’t 100; it’s currently 66, rising to 67 between 2026-28 and, at a later date, to 68. But those entitled to the full new state pension currently receive £230.25 per week, and many would find living on that amount alone quite a challenge.

Having an additional workplace pension accumulating quietly while we work can therefore be a huge benefit. But while our elders and betters were right when they said “start saving regularly and you won’t even notice the payments”, it also means that we can easily forget what a fantastic part of the reward package our workplace pension is - particularly as our employer is also making financial contributions each month.

During Pensions Awareness Week there’s a great opportunity to focus attention back on the benefits of a workplace pension. It’s a chance to remind colleagues about the value of the financial security building up in their workplace pension, and also to point out the benefits to those who haven’t yet joined the scheme but could do so.

Pension Awareness Week starts on 15 September 2025. The [Money Helper website](#) is a useful source of government-supported advice and your pension scheme provider (e.g. the [Local Government Pension Scheme](#) or whichever scheme you offer) may also offer resources to help with your communications.



Learning through action

In a world of complex problems, stretched resources, and rapid change, we rarely get the luxury of stepping back to reflect. **Action Learning Sets (ALS)** are designed to help us do that in a structured, purposeful way that leads to insight, growth, and better outcomes.

Whether you are navigating a local government reorganisation (LGR) or leading a cross-council project, action learning provides a space to think differently, together.

What is action learning?

Originally developed by Professor Reg Revans, action learning is based on the simple but powerful idea that the most valuable learning happens when people come together to explore real challenges, ask insightful questions, and commit to taking action. Revans described learning as:

$$L = P + Q$$

Learning

Programmed knowledge

Questioning

What we already know or can be taught

What we uncover by exploring real-world problems with others

In an action learning set, a small group of peers meet regularly to reflect on live work issues. With the support of a trained facilitator, the group uses open, supportive questioning to help the presenter (the person bringing the issue) clarify their thinking and commit to next steps.

This approach is especially valuable in local government where there are few straightforward answers, and success often depends on reflection, collaboration, and adaptive leadership.

Why it works

- It builds trust and peer support across departments, organisations, or political lines
- It develops reflective practice and stronger problem-solving skills
- It empowers action, with participants taking ownership of their learning and decisions
- It supports leadership at all levels, particularly in times of change or ambiguity

It can work across many settings, such as for councillors reflecting on topical issues, for officers navigating service redesign, and for newly formed teams.

Practical tips for running (or joining) an action learning set

- Create psychological safety: Ground rules are key including confidentiality, respect, and not giving advice unless asked
- Focus on questioning, not fixing: The power lies in helping the presenter think, not rushing to solve their problem for them
- Use a consistent format: Typically, sets are five to seven people, with one or two presenting per session, and each session lasting 1½ to 2 hours
- Keep a reflective journal: This helps participants notice shifts in their thinking over time.

Action learning goes remote

Since the pandemic, the opportunity for successful remotely delivered ALSs has increased. Platforms like Teams or Zoom enable geographically dispersed teams or cross-organisational groups to take part without the barriers of travel or venue costs. Online sets are often easier to schedule and more inclusive of colleagues who work flexibly and can promote diversity and inclusion through engaging with ALS members nationally and internationally.

All it takes is thoughtful facilitation and a commitment to presence which are essential requirements for success in both remote and in-person ALSs.

New opportunity: Action Learning Facilitation training.

We are pleased to offer a training event for those who want to become action learning set facilitators. This event is ideal for anyone involved in leadership development, organisational change, councillor support, or team development.

The training equips participants to:

- Understand the principles and process of action learning
- Facilitate in-person or remote sets with confidence
- Create reflective, action-focused spaces for learning and growth



The poster is for 'Action Learning Facilitator' training, presented by South West Councils. It features a red header with the title and a teal 'NEW!' banner. The text describes the training as 'Perfect for new and aspiring facilitators or those looking to build their confidence'. It lists 'Key takeaways' including understanding core principles, facilitating sets with structure, and handling challenges. It also states that participants will leave with a comprehensive framework and greater confidence. The date is 18 November 2025, from 9.30 to 13.00. Pricing is £121pp (plus VAT) for member organisations and £138pp (plus VAT) for non-member organisations. At the bottom, there are two yellow hand icons pointing towards a central link.

Action Learning Facilitator **NEW!**

Perfect for new and aspiring facilitators or those looking to build their confidence

Key takeaways:

- Understand the core principles of action learning
- Facilitate action learning sets with structure and clarity
- Use effective questioning and reflection techniques
- Handle common facilitation challenges

You'll leave with a comprehensive facilitation framework, proven techniques for reflection and questioning, greater confidence in managing group dynamics and a clear understanding of what makes action learning work.

18 November 2025
9.30 - 13.00

£121pp (plus VAT) for member organisations
£138pp (for VAT) for non-member organisations

CLICK HERE FOR FULL DETAILS

We can also facilitate action learning sets for you

In addition to providing training, we can also provide a neutral ALS facilitator for your organisation, partnership or group. Examples include:

ALSs for officers leading on local government reorganisation and devolution

- Internal ALSs supporting corporate project teams or newly formed services
- Cross-council sets to support emerging leaders or apprenticeship cohorts
- Councillor learning sets, supporting reflection on leadership, governance, or community engagement

If you would like to discuss how ALS could benefit your organisation, or how to train facilitators internally, we would be happy to talk
training@swcouncils.gov.uk.



Open Consultations:

Out-of-school Settings Safeguarding

The DfE is calling for evidence to inform the development of government policy on safeguarding in the out-of-school settings (OOSS) sector.



[Full details here](#)

FS Sector Strategy: Review of the Financial Ombudsman Service

This is a consultation on the government's proposed reforms to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS), following the Economic Secretary's review.



[Full details here](#)

Third State Pension age review: independent report call for evidence, and accompanying policy paper

This call for evidence seeks views on what factors government should consider in determining State Pension age for future decades.



[Full details here](#)

Updated guidance for the Public Transport Ticketing Schemes Block Exemption Summary

The CMA is consulting on updated guidance for the Public Transport Ticketing Schemes Block Exemption.



[Full details here](#)

Call for Evidence Outcome:

RTFO statutory review and future of the scheme

Sought views on the current Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) and how it could be improved, including the treatment of crops and waste.



[Full details here](#)

Research & Data

Transforming the UK's Evidence Base: Government and UKSA Response

The House of Commons released a special report, including a government and UKSA, ONS, and OSR responses to an earlier committee report. The committee's recommendations have been addressed by the Government in this paper.



[Read the the report here](#)

Accredited official statistics: Funded early education and childcare: 2025

Annual January statistics on children under 5 registered for government funded entitlements in England, and on providers and staff delivering them.

These statistics cover the:

- universal entitlement for all 3 and 4-year-olds
- working parent entitlement for eligible children aged 9 months to 4 years
- families receiving additional support entitlement for eligible 2-year-olds



[Full details here](#)

Congratulations & News



Salisbury City Council recently welcomed Mayor Tamara Sheffield from Salisbury, North Carolina, along with her colleague Regina Holloway. Hosted by Mayor John Wells at the Guildhall, the visit included a tour of the historic building, speeches, and the signing of official proclamations. Mayor Sheffield also presented Mayor Wells with the very first “key to the city” from her Salisbury, marking a special moment in the growing friendship between the two communities.



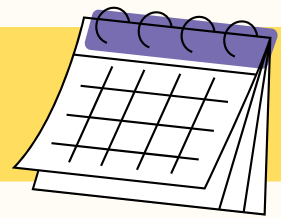
The visit didn't end there - the guests were treated to a trip to Salisbury Cathedral and even Stonehenge, making the most of their time in Wiltshire. Both mayors spoke warmly about the strong connection between the two cities, highlighting a shared sense of heritage and the importance of building relationships across the Atlantic.

Penzance Neighbourhood Plan Secures Overwhelming Backing

The communities of Penzance Parish (Penzance, Newlyn, Mousehole, Heamoor, Gulval, Paul and Eastern Green) Parish have given a clear endorsement to the Neighbourhood Plan, with 91.6% voting in favour at the referendum on 31 July 2025. From the 15,848 people eligible to vote, just over 20% turned out, resulting in 2,928 votes for the plan and 268 against. With this strong backing, the plan will now guide future planning decisions, working alongside Cornwall Council's Local Plan and national planning policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out how the community wants to protect and shape its future. It safeguards more than 80 local green spaces, introduces restrictions to ensure new homes in certain areas are prioritised for local people, and creates policies to protect the distinct identities of villages. It also highlights the importance of biodiversity corridors and green buffers. Mayor Stephen Reynolds welcomed the result, calling it a milestone achievement and praising the years of work by volunteers and local residents who helped bring the plan to life.

Upcoming Courses



FREE!

19 SEPTEMBER

FREE WEBINAR
Financial Wellbeing
Pensions &
Retirement

30 SEPTEMBER

FREE WEBINAR
Financial Wellbeing
Dealing with debt
and money
troubles

03 NOVEMBER

FREE WEBINAR
Financial Wellbeing
Spending / credit /
borrowing

*Some free places
available for our
AI webinars:*

30 SEPTEMBER

AI: Debunking
Myths and
Imagining the
Possibilities

10 OCTOBER

AI: for
Leadership,
harnessing AI in
local
government

Councillor Development Courses:

We still have FREE
places available on our
suite of Councillor
Development Courses

Each Member Authority
has **SIX FREE PLACES**
available*

* with further places available at the
normal cost. Click on the courses
for more information and to book

9 OCTOBER

Resilience and
Wellbeing for
Councillors

14 OCTOBER

Enquiring and
Evidence
Gathering for
Councillors

27 NOVEMBER

Equalities
training for
Councillors

8 DECEMBER

Working in a
Political
Environment

HR Courses:

4 NOVEMBER

Pre-
employment
checks

5 NOVEMBER

Job Evaluation -
GLPC Scheme

11 NOVEMBER

Recruitment
and Selection

CLICK HERE

For details of all our
upcoming courses

Free Jobs Advertising

Broaden your jobseeker audience and improve the quality of candidates

Placing your job vacancy on our site ensures you reach a wide audience with a solid brand

South West Councils' members can advertise for FREE!

SWJobs@swcouncils.gov.uk



We always welcome your input.

If you have anything you would like us to include in our next newsletter, please contact:

info@swcouncils.gov.uk

For all our latest news, courses and updates, follow us on LinkedIn:



**SOUTH WEST CHALLENGE**

Have you got what it takes?

Open to teams of 4-6 people, this popular event will challenge your leadership skills as you become the Management Team of either:

- Local Authority
- Fire Service
- Police Authority
- NHS
- Voluntary Sector
- Housing Association
- Town Council

Working with your team and neighbouring organisations to deliver a *new strategy!*

BOOK NOW

9 December 2025 ★ 9am - 8pm (inc dinner) ★ Westpoint, Exeter



SOUTH WEST COUNCILS

Contact us:

Dennett House
11 Middle Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1SH

Tel: 01823 270101

Email: info@swcouncils.gov.uk