



# Supporting Local Government Excellence: A Year in Review (2025-2026)



People. Leadership. Growth.



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# WELCOME FROM COUNCILLOR TAMOOR TARIO

**Cabinet Member, Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform, Bury Council**  
**Chair of our Executive Board**



This year has once again highlighted the resilience, commitment, and innovation shown across local government and the wider public sector. Despite continued and significant budgetary pressures, our councils and partners have remained steadfast in delivering vital services and supporting the communities who rely on us most.

The challenges remain unprecedented, yet the determination of our workforce and leadership across the North West continues to shine through. Looking ahead, Lancashire's preparations for Local Government Reorganisation represent another significant milestone for the region. Councils are working together to design a more streamlined and effective model of governance that reflects the needs and ambitions of local places. Alongside this, the creation of new Strategic Authorities in Cumbria, Cheshire & Warrington, and Lancashire marks an important evolution in how the North West collaborates, plans, and speaks with a unified voice on the issues that matter most. As these changes unfold we will continue to value and support our members, and ensure that we are with and alongside them in everything that we do.

We will look forward to working with and alongside you over the coming year.

## WELCOME FROM GILLIAN BISHOP

**Our Chief Executive**



As we look ahead to 2026–2027, it's clear that the pace of change across our sector shows no sign of slowing. Workforce expectations are evolving, the political landscape continues to shift, and new legislation - most notably the Employment Rights Act - will bring important changes to how organisations recruit, support, and protect their people. At the same time, our workforces are becoming increasingly diverse, bringing fresh perspectives, new skills, and a renewed focus on inclusion across all levels of public service. Against this backdrop, our commitment remains simple: to be your trusted ally in ensuring you have the right people, in the right place, at the right time. We understand the pressures you are navigating - from ongoing recruitment and retention challenges to growing demand in critical services such as social care - and we are here to support you in keeping your workforce resilient, confident, and equipped for what comes next.

Over the past year, we've continued to evolve our offer in direct response to your needs and feedback. As you adapt, innovate, and re-shape your organisations, we do the same - refining our support across recruitment and assessment, pay and workforce analysis, coaching and mentoring, and through the extensive networks that connect leaders and practitioners across the region. We remain privileged to walk alongside you, helping you invest in what matters most: your people. On behalf of the whole team at North West Employers, thank you for your dedication, your partnership, and the incredible work you deliver every day for communities across the region. The year ahead holds exciting opportunities, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you as your Regional Employers' Organisation.



# INTRODUCTION

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## Our purpose:

Strengthening Public Sector Leadership through People Centred Solutions - owned and led by North West Authorities.

We provide trusted HR, leadership and transformational change expertise to ensure North West Local Authorities and their teams are resilient, future ready and thriving in a changing world.

We are your Regional Employer Organisation and our close relationship with regional and national partner organisations helps us build a stronger and more connected North West.

What makes us unique is that we are part of the sector, owned and led by you, our stakeholder member local authorities. We are committed to serving your needs and creating opportunities for the voice of the North West to be heard.

North West Employers has built a reputation for being a trusted member- led organisation and a solution focused partner. Our membership consists of the 34 Local Authorities within the geographical areas of Cheshire and Merseyside, Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region, and the emerging Strategic Authorities in the North West.



## Our Pillars of Expertise:

### 1. HR & Workforce (Independent, expert support when it matters most)

We provide impartial, specialist advice across the full spectrum of HR - from sensitive employee relations and complex casework to organisational change and risk. Our support is confidential, independent and grounded in deep technical expertise. Whether navigating workplace investigations, policy development, or strategic workforce planning, we offer trusted HR advice and tailored services, employment law guidance, and compliance support - always with a focus on safeguarding your people and your organisation.



### 2. Leadership & Talent (Developing leaders who inspire and drive change)

We empower public sector leaders with the skills, confidence, and mindset to enable transformational change, while attracting, retaining, and developing top talent. Our bespoke coaching, training, leadership programmes and support strengthen leadership at all levels.



# INTRODUCTION

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## 3. Systems & Culture Change (Driving transformational change through people and collaboration)

We support organisations to navigate complex change. Through cultural transformation, strategic workforce development, cross sector collaboration and systems leadership, our expertise enables organisations to foster innovation and long-term success.

## 4. Collective North West Voice (Championing the collective power of North West authorities)

We amplify the needs and priorities of North West authorities on national and regional platforms.

Through collaboration, shared learning, advocacy and convenor expertise, we drive policy influence and sector-wide progress.

More detailed information on each of the above pillars can be found on pages 22-29.





# OUR GOVERNANCE

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We're guided and shaped by our member organisations. Each one nominates an elected member representative to North West Employers every year, and these representatives play a central role in our governance. They appoint our Chair, Deputy Chair and Vice Chairs, as well as members of the Executive Board at our Annual General Meeting.

Our member representatives are instrumental in setting our strategic direction. They provide strong governance, oversee our financial sustainability, and make sure we use membership funding wisely and transparently. Alongside them, we have an independent Honorary Treasurer and external auditors who support compliance and accountability, with our accounts submitted annually to the Certification Officer.

Day-to-day leadership comes from our Chief Executive and Leadership Team, supported by a small team of highly skilled core staff and a network of professional associates.

As a not-for-profit organisation, everything we receive - whether through membership subscriptions or additional consultancy and support - is reinvested back into public services across the North West. Being a stakeholder-owned and led organisation is something we're genuinely proud of, and your priorities remain at the heart of everything we do.

Through your organisation's subscription, all council employees and elected members can access our full membership offer—from expert advice and events to tailored support such as Chief Executive appraisals and councillor development.

Our offer evolves throughout the year to match the changing public sector landscape. While this brochure outlines the core benefits, we're always ready to adapt and tailor our support to what your organisation needs most.





# HIGHLIGHTS 2025-2026 - A BUSY YEAR!

## HR and Workforce

### Workforce Metrics to Support Local Government

In 2025/2026 we were pleased to offer the Infinistats platform to all of our members. The Workforce Capacity Metrics Survey collects annual workforce metrics that local authorities can use for assessing and reporting workforce capacity – and comparing with other councils. Data collection and analysis is facilitated using the InfiniStats platform that has been providing HR Metrics Benchmarking for local government since 2010. The annual national survey is coordinated by each regional employers' organisation. The survey covers a range of metrics such as headcount, FTE, age etc. The InfiniStats platform also offers a more comprehensive set of HR Benchmark Surveys, including pay, recruitment and retention, terms and conditions etc.



### Workforce Strategy

Councils across the North West face significant workforce challenges, but there has been no shared understanding of the region's overall position. To address this, we prioritised the creation of a data driven North West Regional Workforce Strategy for 2025/26, identifying opportunities for collaboration and reducing duplicated effort. The Regional Workforce Strategy was launched at our HR Summit on 1 October 2025. The strategy will be implemented and reviewed over the next three years.





# HIGHLIGHTS 2025-2026 - A BUSY YEAR!

## Leadership and Talent

### Tri-Sector Challenge: Delivering Valuable Skills in a Safe Environment

The North West Tri Sector Challenge 2025 was the third annual leadership simulation event delivered by North West Employers in partnership with RWTA Ltd. It took place on Thursday, 12 June 2025, at Deepdale Stadium in Preston.

#### Purpose & Format:

The event was designed to develop future public sector leaders by placing teams in a high pressure, senior management simulation, where they took charge of a fictitious council for the day. Participants collaborated to tackle complex, real world public service challenges, make strategic decisions, manage limited resources, and respond to politically sensitive issues.

#### The challenges on the day were:

- Cross sector collaboration
- Leadership under pressure
- Strategic prioritisation
- Communication and teamwork
- Resilience and adaptability in rapidly changing situations



#### Participants:

There were teams from across the local government and fire and rescue services, in the North West region. Previous events have been highly popular and well received, with participants reporting significant development gains, exposure to senior level complexity, and opportunities to apply new skills back in their organisations.



#### Winners for the North West Tri Sector Challenge 2025 included:

- Best Team Winners: Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Runners-up: Chorley Council & South Ribble Council / St Helens Borough Council / Wigan Council Team 1 / Wigan Council Team 2
- Behaviours Winners: Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Communications Winners: Wigan Council Team 2
- Leadership Winners: St Helens Borough Council
- Shining Star Award: James Mayers (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Team 1)



# HIGHLIGHTS 2025-2026 - A BUSY YEAR!

## Leadership and Talent

### Leadership Development: CMI Level 7: Aspiring Executive Leadership Programme

The challenges facing local government have never been greater – and the need for visionary, capable senior leaders has never been more urgent. To help meet this challenge, in partnership with the Academy of Leadership & Management, we enrolled 10 cohorts of the CMI Level 7: Aspiring Executive Leadership Programme. The programme blends a variety of engaging and practical learning experiences, including:

- Workshops: exploring advanced leadership and strategic management themes
- Executive coaching: one-to-one support to accelerate personal growth
- Strategic research projects: applying learning to real-world local government challenges
- Tailored learning pathways: focusing on individual leadership goals
- Regional focus: addressing the unique priorities of North West local authorities



The programme has already helped many talented leaders across the North West to build the skills, confidence, and strategic insight needed to excel at the highest levels of local government. Participants consistently describe the experience as transformational – enhancing not only their professional capabilities, but also their impact on the communities they serve.



# HIGHLIGHTS 2025-2026 - A BUSY YEAR!

## Systems and Culture Change

### Research Practice: Neurodiversity at Work

Members have told us they want more guidance, more shared learning, and more confidence in fulfilling their responsibility to support neurodivergence in the workplace. Over the last year we have built partnerships with academic and research organisations to have access to the latest sector relevant research and contribute to a paper that addresses the key challenges.

Across our network, colleagues have shared their experiences, their challenges, and their aspirations for doing better. It is their voice, practical, honest, and deeply committed to inclusion, that sits at the heart of this report, published March 2026.

This document provides the foundations for that development by capturing line-manager perspectives, identifying skill gaps, and signalling the structural and cultural shifts required to improve practice. Our ambition is that this work will not only inform but also inspire; inspire leaders to champion neuro inclusion; inspire line-managers to engage with curiosity and confidence; and inspire organisations to create the conditions in which every individual can thrive.

The report will be available in the resources section of our website.



### Evidence and Behavioural-Based Programmes

We have seen many colleagues from around the region engage with and benefit from our evidence and behavioural-based programme.

The sessions support colleagues to understand and appreciate the importance of considering the human element of workforce support and development. They also provide the skills to be evidence-informed and data-driven in their practice.

We are offering these programmes as part of your membership in 2026-27, and have dates for programmes on our website.



# HIGHLIGHTS 2025-2026 - A BUSY YEAR!

## Collective North West Voice



### Powering up the North West

This year, the North West Regional Leaders Board has continued to accelerate the collective ambition of our region, building on the energy and momentum from our successful 2025 Parliamentary Reception. Leaders from all 36 local authorities, together with the Mayors of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region, are driving forward a bold agenda designed to unleash the full potential of the North West. In 2026, we sharpened our focus on the issues that matter most - Transport, Housing, and Children's and Adults' Services - reflecting our commitment to creating a more connected, resilient, and opportunity-rich region for every resident. As we prepare to engage with central government and North West MPs in April, particularly on the critical challenges of Adult and Children's Social Care, we do so with confidence, collaboration, and a shared belief in the transformative impact our region can achieve when we speak with one powerful voice.





# SPOTLIGHT ON NEW SERVICES DELIVERING REAL IMPACT

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## **Artificial Intelligence**

North West Employers provides a growing AI offer including focused development opportunities designed to build practical, ethical and future-ready AI capability across the public sector workforce.

### **Our core AI offer includes:**

AI & Data Apprenticeships (Levels 3–6) delivered in partnership with 'Decoded', helping staff develop skills in data cleansing, visualisation, automation, analytics and responsible use of generative AI. These programmes create a talent pipeline and strengthen data literacy across councils. We also deliver several insights and briefing sessions relating to AI and its impact on the workforces which have included - AI and strategic change, AI and Recruitment, Preventing Fake AI applications and the future of AI.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

North West Employers run an EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Network to create a safe space where people can connect authentically, share experiences, and shape a more inclusive workplace in a way that feels grounded and human rather than corporate or formal. Our relaxed, professional network encourages open conversations, helping employees feel valued and heard while still keeping the focus on meaningful organisational improvement. It has also supported better collaboration across teams, boosts morale, and strengthens a company's culture by showing that inclusion isn't just a policy - it's a lived practice. We have found that when people feel comfortable contributing, the business benefits from richer ideas, improved problem solving, and a stronger sense of community, all of which help attract and retain talent.

At our networks we invite guest speakers to cover topics that are relevant within the EDI Space and ensure our delegates have a relevant takeaway.

## **Resource Hub**

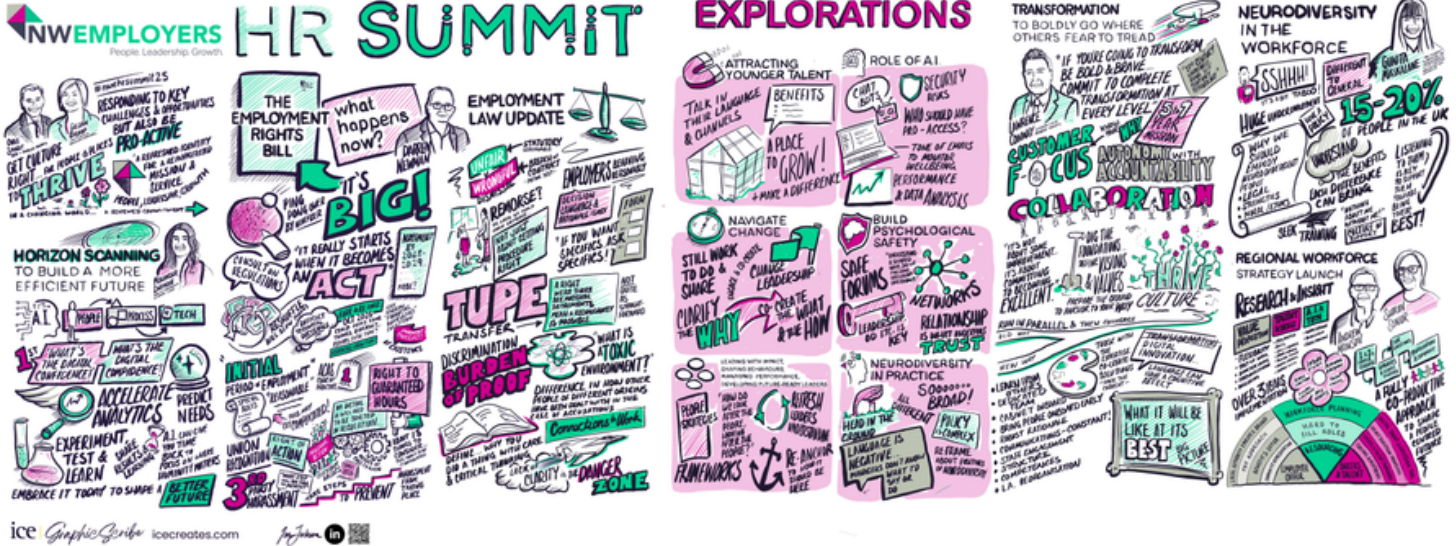
In 2025 we delivered new ways for you to connect with fresh ideas and innovative solutions with our new Resource Hub and Podcasts hosted on our website, and insightful articles designed to be thought provoking.

Each podcast is designed to be easy to listen to, and provides useful information on a range of topics - look out for new podcasts to be released this year.



# YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH US IN 2025-2026

## Key Events



70

HR Summit attendees



49

Pay Consultation  
Briefing attendees



1

North West Councillor  
Development Charter  
Award - Wyre Council



# YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH US IN 2025-2026

## HR and Workforce



**227**

HR Advice Line Queries



**24**

HR and Pay  
Communications



**3**

HR Investigations



**2**

Job Evaluations



**2**

Schools HR Network  
Meetings with  
**70**  
attendees



**6**

HR Webinars with  
**510**  
attendees



**6**

Sub-Regional HR  
Networks with  
**46**  
attendees



**17**

National Events and  
Meetings



**26**

Councils providing  
Infinistats Data



**57**

Hiring Safely with CIPD  
webinar attendees



**16**

Councils involved in the  
CIPD Tools Insights with  
**309**  
completed



**9**

LGR Network Meetings  
with  
**117**  
attendees



# YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH US IN 2025-2026

## Leadership and Talent



4

Senior Team Away  
Days



18

Chief Executive  
Appraisals



10

Cohorts of Aspiring Executive  
Leaders' Programme with

81

participants



1

Aspiring Executive  
Leaders' Programme  
Conference with

96

attendees



8

Collaborative  
Masterclasses' with

126

attendees



2

Writing Recruitment  
Ads Sessions with

39

attendees



4

Health and Wellbeing  
Events with

52

attendees



13

How Scrutiny Works  
attendees



7

Overview and Scrutiny  
for Chairs and Vice-  
Chairs attendees



482

Gov Bond participants



1

Cohort of Life as a  
Councillor with

8

attendees



# YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH US IN 2025-2026

## Systems and Culture Change



**52**

Executive Coaching  
Sessions



**8**

Evidence and  
Behaviour-Based  
Sessions with  
**140**  
attendees



**1**

ODPE Cohort with  
**7**  
attendees

## Collective North West Voice



**2**

North West Regional  
Leaders Board  
Meetings with  
**28**  
attendees



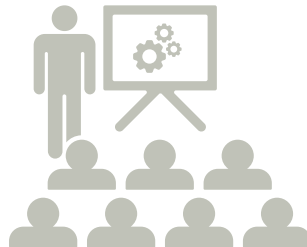
**54**

Networks Held with  
**857**  
attendees



**83**

Business Development  
Manager Engagement  
Quarterly Meetings with  
Members



LGA Annual Conference

Quarterly Executive  
Board meetings

CIPD Conference

North West Employers Annual  
Conference - Connected Leadership:  
Shaping Tomorrow Together

iNetwork Conference

PPMA Conference

CIPFA Conference



# CORPORATE PRIORITIES

## 2026-2027

|                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Pillars of Expertise                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Key Deliverables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Core Purpose</b><br>Our purpose is to strengthen Public Sector Leadership through People-centred solutions – owned and led by North West Authorities                                                | <b>HR &amp; Workforce (independent, expert support when it matters most)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve access to regional and national workforce data</li> <li>Assist councils to understand and prepare for significant changes to employment law changes</li> <li>Implement the Regional Workforce Strategy</li> <li>Expand HR-related consultancy offer</li> </ul>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with HR Metrics Governance Board and councils to identify improvements to workforce data collection and access</li> <li>Deliver events and webinars explaining the provisions of the Employment Rights Act and the Equality (Race &amp; Disability) Bill</li> <li>Establish task-and-finish groups for the Regional Workforce Strategy to deliver key outputs</li> <li>Comprehensive support offer for LGR and new Strategic Authorities</li> <li>A suite of leadership programmes ( accredited and non-accredited)</li> <li>Talent development pathways</li> <li>Launch of cross-sector Coaching and Mentoring Pool</li> <li>Castlefield recruitment partnership</li> <li>Comprehensive programme of support for Councillors</li> <li>Thought leadership pieces</li> <li>AI Apprenticeship cohorts at various levels 3-6</li> <li>EDI cohorts on level 3 and 7 programmes</li> <li>EDI charter</li> <li>Innovation Lab and supporting resources</li> <li>Annual Conference</li> <li>NWRLB Parliamentary Reception.</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Leadership &amp; Talent (developing leaders who inspire and drive change)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equip leaders to navigate complexity and drive transformational change</li> <li>Attract, retain and develop top public sector talent</li> <li>Support and Develop Elected Members</li> <li>Build resilience and strategic thinking through Coaching &amp; Mentoring</li> </ul>                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Impact</b><br>We provide trusted HR, leadership and transformational change expertise to ensure North West Authorities and their teams are resilient, future-ready and thriving in a changing world | <b>Systems &amp; Culture Change (driving transformational change through people and collaboration)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support emerging AI and Technology needs</li> <li>Ensure EDI awareness and commitment to inclusive practice</li> <li>Support leaders and managers with Strategic change challenges</li> <li>Encourage and support innovation</li> <li>Promote Health and Wellbeing practices</li> </ul>                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Collective North West Voice (championing the collective power of North West authorities)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a platform for North West priorities to be heard and actioned</li> <li>Further develop strategic collaborations &amp; partnerships</li> <li>Proactively work with Trade Unions in the role of Regional Employer</li> <li>Contribute to local government specific thought leadership research.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>North West Employers: A forward looking, viable and sustainable organisation focused on meeting member priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure we have the internal capability, systems, and culture necessary to deliver excellence and scale sustainably</li> <li>Grow impact, visibility, and engagement across the public sector through thought leadership and partnerships.</li> </ul>                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026-2027

## Annual Conference

Our 2026 Annual Conference, *Connected Leadership: Shaping Tomorrow Together*, will bring colleagues from across the North West together for a day of insight, challenge and collaboration. Hosted in St Helens, the programme will take us from a national wellbeing perspective with Carnegie UK, through a powerful regional vision for investment and devolution from the North West Regional Leaders' Board, and into a series of lively 'Conversation Stage' discussions. These sessions will explore the future realities of social care, the rapidly changing landscape of local government, and the evolving world of people and work – including employment rights, regional workforce priorities and neurodiversity. With a blend of panels, fireside chats and expert contributions, the conference will be designed to spark connection, fresh thinking and practical leadership for the year ahead.



## Tri-Sector Challenge

The North West Tri Sector Challenge 2026, offers a lively yet professional space for aspiring leaders to stretch their thinking and step confidently into senior level decision making. Taking place on 11 June 2026 at the Halliwell Jones Stadium in Warrington, the event brings together teams from across public, private and voluntary sectors to tackle complex, real world organisational challenges in a supportive, high energy environment. Participants spend the day working collaboratively under pressure - setting strategic priorities, navigating politically sensitive issues and sharpening their resilience in a simulation that feels impactful without being overly formal. The relaxed, hands-on style helps people connect easily, think creatively and enjoy the experience, all while developing meaningful leadership skills that translate back into the workplace.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026-2027

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## Coaching Pool

We are pleased to be partnering with North West ADASS and the NHS Leadership Academy to establish a new Regional Coaching Pool. This collaborative initiative will bring together experienced coaches from across the sector, creating a shared resource that enables participating organisations to access high-quality coaching for colleagues at all levels.

Our aim is to broaden access to coaching and to help strengthen a positive and sustainable coaching culture across the North West public sector. By working together, we can enhance capability, support personal development, and promote a more collaborative approach to learning, management, and leadership.

The Regional Coaching Pool will be launched in June 2026 during UK National Coaching Week. Further information on how organisations and individuals can get involved will be shared as we move closer to launch and continue with the rollout.

## Employment Law Update

Darren Newman will once again be hosting his annual Employment Law Update in 2026. This session will provide attendees with a clear, engaging overview of the key legislative changes and case law developments shaping the employment landscape for the year ahead. Known for his practical insight and ability to explain complex issues with clarity, Darren will guide participants through the most significant updates affecting employers, HR professionals and managers. This session is an ideal opportunity to stay informed, ask questions and ensure your organisation is prepared for the evolving legal environment.





# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026-2027

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## HR Summit

Following the success of last year's inaugural HR Summit, we are planning a similar event again this autumn. The summit will once again provide an excellent opportunity for HR professionals from across the region to connect, share best practice, explore emerging trends, and stay up to date with the latest legislative developments. Further details and a 'save the date' will be shared shortly.



## Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

As councils across the region prepare for the significant changes brought by Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution in the year ahead, North West Employers will be right alongside you. We know these shifts are about far more than new structures - they're about people, culture, leadership, and creating organisations that can thrive long into the future.

Through our four pillars of support, we'll help you navigate every step: offering independent HR and workforce advice when it matters most, developing leaders who can guide their teams with confidence, driving system and culture change that turns strategy into reality, and amplifying a strong collective North West voice to influence and shape what comes next.

From practical change support and organisational resilience to webinars and guidance for those taking on pivotal leadership roles, our approach is people-centred, grounded, and designed to give you clarity and momentum during a complex time. Big changes are coming - but you don't have to face them alone.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026-2027

## Executive Recruitment

We are pleased to share details of a new and enhanced Executive Search and Assessment Centre partnership now available exclusively to North West Employers member organisations. This collaboration brings together the shared strengths of North West Employers and Castlefield Recruitment, offering a comprehensive, values-led and regionally connected solution for senior and executive recruitment.

Why This Partnership? North West Employers' purpose is to strengthen public sector leadership through people-centred, trusted HR and workforce solutions. As your Regional Employers' Organisation, we understand the governance, expectations and unique challenges faced by local authorities across the North West.

Castlefield Recruitment brings national reach with local expertise, a 12-year track record in Local Government recruitment, and a 100% success rate on retained campaigns in 2025. Their Manchester-based executive search team provides targeted headhunting, marketing, and candidate management for high-profile roles across the region. Together, we are able to provide a seamless, end-to-end recruitment and assessment service specifically designed for senior roles in Local Government so please do consider us first for any of your future senior recruitment needs.





# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS

## MEMBER BENEFITS

### HR and Workforce

|                                                                               | Activity Delivered by North West Employers                                                                         | Benefits to Member Organisations                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Regional responses to national consultation                                   | Consultation on national bargaining decisions, policy development and government proposals for legislative change. | Ensure councils are aware of proposed changes and that the North West Region contributes to the conversation.                                                               |
| Strategic relationships with joint Trade Unions                               | Joint Regional Council and role of Employers Secretary for any joint conciliation process for local disputes.      | Increase communication and joint understanding of industrial relations issues. Provides additional support to councils seeking dispute resolution/avoiding escalation.      |
| Representing the North West at the National Association of Regional Employers | Attendance at monthly operational meetings with the LGA and quarterly meetings of NARE with Elected Members.       | Opportunity to share intelligence across the regions and engage in collaborative working.                                                                                   |
| Expert HR and employment advice                                               | Unlimited helpdesk service via phone and email for your most complex HR issues.                                    | Support councils to risk assess and identify options/solutions. Gather/share intelligence on workforce issues across the region. Build relations with senior HR colleagues. |
| Monthly HR webinar                                                            | A regular look at current and developing HR and employment issues.                                                 | Keep the HR community updated on current and future HR issues.                                                                                                              |
| Regional HR networks                                                          | Hosting quarterly sub-regional meetings for Heads of HR.                                                           | Bring together senior HR colleagues at a sub-regional level (regional for the Schools Network) to enable discussion on current topics of interest.                          |
| Annual Employment Law Update                                                  | Expert advice and updates on legislation.                                                                          | Update the HR community on employment law developments.                                                                                                                     |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS MEMBER BENEFITS

## HR and Workforce

|                                                                                     | Activity Delivered by North West Employers                                                                                                         | Benefits to Member Organisations                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HR Data Insights and Benchmarking Portal                                            | North West Employers are funding access to the Infinistats portal for all councils to enable them to share and access data across core HR metrics. | Enabling councils to share and view data across key HR metrics, saving time and producing quality, dynamic comparison data.                          |
| Pay updates and circulars                                                           | Timely circulars on national pay updates to Chief Execs and Heads of HR.                                                                           | Keeping senior colleagues informed on national pay developments and related issues - e.g. threat of industrial action.                               |
| HR Summit                                                                           | Access to a HR focused conference.                                                                                                                 | Enabling the HR community to come together on an in-person basis for networking opportunities and hear expert speakers on current HR-related topics. |
| Regional Workforce Strategy                                                         |                                                                                                                                                    | Identifying and collaborating on key issues impacting the current and future local government workforce.                                             |
| Policy briefings                                                                    | Regular updates.                                                                                                                                   | Keeping senior colleagues informed of new and proposed policy changes.                                                                               |
| Confidential, independent advice to the Leader and Chief Execs on employment issues | Provided on request.                                                                                                                               | Establishes North West Employers as the 'go to' for trusted and discreet professional advice on senior officer/member employment matters.            |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS MEMBER BENEFITS

## Leadership and Talent

|                                                                                                                 | Activity Delivered by North West Employers                         | Benefits to Member Organisations                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chief Executive Appraisal                                                                                       | Independent facilitation of annual appraisal and six month review. | Meeting the JNC requirement of appraisals for Chief Executives and providing support to Council Leaders with the performance review process. |
| Introductory meeting for all new Chief Executives and Senior Leaders                                            | Support for new members of Senior Leadership Teams.                | Help build connections and support ongoing development in the role.                                                                          |
| Advice and guidance on Chief Executive recruitment                                                              | Support for member panels and Heads of HR.                         | Independent perspective to support you in attracting candidates and ensuring a consistent approach from panels.                              |
| Expert, confidential advice to the Chief Executive/HR Director on employment issues relating to statutory roles | Provided on request                                                | Bringing experience and expertise to these key roles in the sector.                                                                          |
| Political Leadership Networks                                                                                   | Quarterly                                                          | Sharing best practice and developing collaborative approaches to specific areas of knowledge.                                                |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS MEMBER BENEFITS

## Leadership and Talent

|                                     | Activity Delivered by North West Employers                                | Benefits to Member Organisations                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| North West Regional Leaders Board   | Quarterly                                                                 | Bringing Council Leaders together to amplify the collective voice on key, strategic issues.                                                                       |
| Strategic Scrutiny                  | Quarterly                                                                 | Sharing best practice and developing collaborative approaches to specific areas of knowledge.                                                                     |
| Councillor Development              | Quarterly                                                                 | Sharing best practice and developing collaborative approaches to specific areas of knowledge.                                                                     |
| Women in Political Leadership       | Quarterly                                                                 | Sharing best practice and developing collaborative approaches to specific areas of knowledge.                                                                     |
| Adult Portfolio Holders             | Quarterly                                                                 | Sharing best practice and developing collaborative approaches to specific areas of knowledge.                                                                     |
| Childrens Portfolio Holders         | Quarterly                                                                 | Sharing best practice and developing collaborative approaches to specific areas of knowledge.                                                                     |
| Chief Executive network             | Twice yearly                                                              | Providing a confidential space for Chief Executive's to discuss key strategic issues.                                                                             |
| Regional Councillor Induction       | Annual induction programme open to all newly-elected councillors          | Helps to build contacts and support members in their first few months                                                                                             |
| Collaborative Masterclass Programme | Access for all members to an annual programme of leadership masterclasses | Masterclasses offer unique insight into the latest thinking within key areas along with showcasing the work that is being undertaken by sector leads and experts. |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS

## MEMBER BENEFITS

### Systems and Culture Change

|                                           | <b>Activity Delivered by North West Employers</b>                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Benefits to Member Organisations</b>                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CIPD discount                             | Secured 15% discount for CIPD events as part of our developing partnership.                                                                                                                        | This will allow members to access CIPD courses and conferences at a discounted rate.                                                                                                                         |
| Councillor Development Charter Award      | Three yearly review of your approach to councillor development approach and use of a self-assessment tool                                                                                          | Helps councils to focus on the development needs of Cllr's and to ensure that they have a structured and evidenced approach to development activities.                                                       |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter | We have developed a regional EDI charter that assesses organisational and leadership behaviours and how they impact EDI.                                                                           | Helps councils to consider their approach to EDI and how organisational behaviours may impact this. It also helps ensure a level of accountability and consistency in the approach to EDI across the region. |
| Organisational Development Network        | Quarterly meetings where colleagues can discuss the topics that are important to them and the sector. We secure guest speakers who will present their findings and/or activities within key areas. | This network supports the OD capacity within the region and also allows best practice and knowledge exchange to take place.                                                                                  |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS

## MEMBER BENEFITS

### Systems and Culture Change

|                        | Activity Delivered by North West Employers                                                                                                                                                   | Benefits to Member Organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Annual Conference      | At least 3 places for every council at our annual conference "Connected Leadership; Shaping Tomorrow Together".                                                                              | Our annual conference offers a range of member benefits including the opportunity to network with colleagues from around the region, to hear high quality speakers discuss key topics, and to engage with other sector partners and representatives. |
| Coaching Portal        | We are in the process of developing the coaching portal with NHS Leadership Academy and NW ADASS. This will be launched summer 2026.                                                         | This will allow access to free coaching to those who contribute to and form part of the coaching pool, along with CPD opportunities for coaches involved.                                                                                            |
| Monthly learning lunch | This is a new offer within our membership and will provide short insights into key topics which members can access in their lunch time.                                                      | A great opportunity to disseminate information and key insights. It will also help with capacity due to the accessibility of shorter sessions.                                                                                                       |
| Devo/LGR support       | We are looking at a Q&A with leaders and CEOs of Cumbria to share knowledge and lessons learnt. We will also be looking at what other activities are needed as we progress through the year. | A great opportunity to disseminate information and key insights. It will also help with capacity due to the accessibility of shorter sessions.                                                                                                       |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS MEMBER BENEFITS

## Collective North West Voice

|                                             | <b>Activity Delivered by North West Employers</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Benefits to Member Organisations</b>                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strategic Collaboration with Partners       | North West Employers is part of the NW Collaborative – actively partnering with organisations to respond to system-wide L&D needs                        | We empower public sector leaders to unlock leadership potential to navigate complexity and deliver impact.                                              |
| Thought Leadership and insights             | Instigating and contributing to national and regional research projects i.e. Councillor and Care, MMU, LJMU, UofB                                        | Through cultural transformation, cross sector collaboration and convenor expertise, we enable organisations to foster innovation and long term success. |
| Round table discussions on strategic issues | Quarterly face to face strategic discussions with Senior Leaders. Share outcomes (and seek sponsorship) via national sector publications such as MJ, LGC | Convening partners to create a strong and unified voice shaping the future of the North West public sector.                                             |
| Local Gov representation on health bodies   | Ensure that North West Local government issues, challenges and opportunities are considered as part of health discussions and strategic planning         | Amplify the needs and priorities of North West authorities on health platforms.                                                                         |



# NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS MEMBER BENEFITS

## Collective North West Voice

|                                                                           | <b>Activity Delivered by North West Employers</b>                                                                                                                               | <b>Benefits to Member Organisations</b>                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NARE interface                                                            | Maximise the potential of the national REO network to create a national voice on strategic REO matters                                                                          | Convening partners to create a strong and unified voice shaping the future of the North West and wider Regional Employer Organisations national community.           |
| Basecamp – Communities of Practice                                        | Access to online forums themed to specialist areas                                                                                                                              | Provision of timely and accessible advice and support across the full spectrum of people centred issues.                                                             |
| Bi-monthly newsletter                                                     | Regular updates of The North West Voice issued to all members                                                                                                                   | Supporting organisations to navigate complex change, and empowering public sector leaders with the skills, confidence and mindset to enable transformational change. |
| Podcasts                                                                  | Quarterly series of podcasts to contribute to new thinking, share innovative practice and showcasing the work underway in the North West local government and public sector     | Through collaboration and shared learning we will drive policy influence and sector wide progress                                                                    |
| Attendance on behalf of the North West at National & Regional Conferences | North West Employers attendance at LGA, CIPFA, PPMA conferences to promote the work of North West Employers, engage with our members and gain knowledge for wider dissemination | Amplify the needs and priorities of North West authorities on national and regional platforms.                                                                       |



# DELIVERING FOR YOU

## OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

---



**GILLIAN  
BISHOP**

Chief Executive

Gillian Bishop is Chief Executive at North West Employers, leading the organisation's ambition, strategic direction and long-term sustainability. She works closely with members, the Executive Board and partners to ensure North West Employers continues to provide trusted people centred support and solutions to local government and the wider public sector.

With over 30 years' experience across local government, public and charity sectors, Gillian brings deep expertise in strategic change, organisational leadership, corporate planning and transformation. She has extensive networks across the North West and nationally, and is highly experienced in building strategic collaborations, chairing boards and managing complex stakeholder relationships. As an Executive Coach, she is deeply committed to supporting leaders and organisations to maximise their full potential.

Gillian is passionate about the role of local government and the positive impact it has on communities and places across the North West. A strategic, visionary leader, she is known for her collaborative and inclusive approach, thriving on challenge and continually seeking opportunities to innovate, grow and strengthen organisations so they are resilient and fit for the future.

Outside of work, Gillian volunteers with local community sporting clubs and enjoys spending time with her family, staying active and making the most of the outdoors.



**SHARON  
SENIOR**

Executive Director

Sharon Senior is Executive Director at North West Employers, providing strategic leadership and working closely with members, partners, and the internal team to deliver the organisation's vision and priorities. She helps shape strategy and ensures meaningful outcomes for members, always staying ahead of the latest developments.

With over 30 years' experience across private and public sectors - including leadership roles in local government - Sharon brings expertise in organisational development, learning and development, and executive coaching. She's motivated by seeing others grow and navigate change, and loves the variety her role offers, from coaching senior leaders to facilitating groups. Outside of work, Sharon enjoys travelling and exploring new places.



# DELIVERING FOR YOU

## OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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**ANDREW  
MANSON**

Strategic Lead - HR,  
Employee Relations  
and Employment Law

Andrew Manson is an accomplished HR leader with more than 30 years of professional experience spanning the full spectrum of human resources, employee relations, and employment law. As Strategic Lead at North West Employers, Andrew provides expert guidance and insight to organisations navigating complex people-related challenges.

Throughout his career, Andrew has built a strong reputation for delivering balanced, pragmatic advice on HR and employment law matters. His experience includes leading on employee relations - ranging from everyday workforce issues to industrial action - alongside conducting sensitive and confidential investigations, and supporting organisations through job evaluation and pay review processes.



**KEVAN  
COLLIER**

Strategic Lead -  
Learning and  
Development

Kevan Collier is the Strategic Lead for Learning and Organisational Development for North West Employers. He is an experienced people professional and recognised thought leader with deep expertise in behavioural and social science. With an academic background in behavioural psychology and social science, he brings a research-driven lens to understanding human behaviour at work.

Kevan is also an executive coach and works with leaders and workforces across the region to help them achieve their potential.

Since joining the public sector in 2016, Kevan has supported local government organisations to develop their workforces using behavioural insights and evidence-based practice. He regularly contributes to industry events and conferences, including CIPD's Behavioural Science in the Workplace conference, and his work has also featured in academic publications, such as the Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology.

Kevan is passionate about translating robust research into practical organisational strategies - helping leaders and teams better understand people, create environments where individuals thrive, and enable high performance.



# OUR STAKEHOLDERS 2026-2027

We're proud to have you as our stakeholders.



## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS 2026-2027





## OUR VALUES

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We Are One  
**Team**



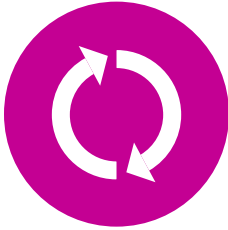
We Are  
**Responsive**



We Are  
**Understanding**



We Are  
**Supportive**



We Are  
**Transformational**



We Have  
**Expertise**



We Make A  
**Difference**



North West Employers  
Suite 2.3, 2nd Floor  
ICE Building 3  
Exchange Quay  
Salford Quays  
Manchester  
M5 3ED



0161 834 9362



[support@nwemployers.org.uk](mailto:support@nwemployers.org.uk)



[nwemployers.org.uk](http://nwemployers.org.uk)



People. Leadership. Growth.



# OUR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

## 2025-2026

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For The Year Ended 31 March 2026



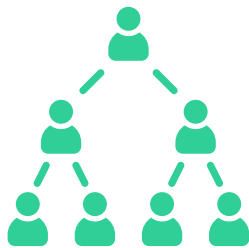
### Income

Levies on Local Authorities £647,655  
Subscription & Mailing List £6,295  
Training, Consultancy Fees and  
External Project Grants £471,709  
Interest Receivable £22,474  
**£1,148,133**



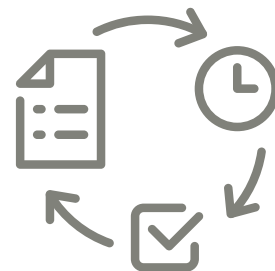
### Expenditure

Employment & Similar Costs £731,627  
Premises £68,012  
Training, Consultancy Fees and  
External Project Grants £268,806  
Establishment £95,354  
**£1,163,799**



### Defined Benefit Scheme

Change in Present Value of  
**£0**



### Surplus

Operating Deficit  
**-£15,666**  
Deficit For The Financial Year  
**-£15,666**

Our full accounts can be found on the certification offices website from August 2026.