GUARDIAN EMPLOYERS ORGANISATION
LR2/6/3/316
Assisting Employers in Labour Law

JANUARY 2026

NEWSLETTER

1. Best Wishes for 2026

Dear Members,

As we step into 2026, everyone at the Guardian Employers Organisation would like to extend our very best wishes to you and your teams for a successful, productive, and positive year ahead.

2025 was a year of continued change and challenge for employers across all sectors. Your resilience, adaptability, and commitment to best practice have once again demonstrated the strength of our employer community. We look forward to continuing to support you throughout 2026 with practical advice, representation, and timely updates on employment and workplace relations matters.

Thank you for your continued membership and engagement. We value the trust you place in us and remain committed to helping you navigate the evolving employment landscape with confidence.

2. **Important Update: National Minimum Wage Increase Effective 1 March 2026**

Members are reminded that the new **National Minimum Wage** (NMW) will come into effect on **1 March 2026.**

New National Minimum Wage

- The new NMW will be **R30.23 per hour.**
- This represents a **5% increase** from the previous NMW of **R28.79 per hour.**
- Based on **195 working hours per month,** this equates to a **monthly minimum wage of R5,894.85**

Employers must ensure that all qualifying employees are paid at least these amounts from the effective date.

Important compliance note

- An employee must be paid for at least four (4) hours per day, even if they work fewer hours on that day.
- This requirement applies regardless of the employee's start or finish time and must be included in scheduling and payroll calculations.

What this means for employers

- All employees covered by the National Minimum Wage Act must receive the updated rate from 1 March 2026 onwards.
- This includes full-time, part-time, and casual staff.
- Employers should also review any allowances, penalties, or benefits tied to the minimum wage.

Actions to take now

- Review current wage structures and identify affected employees.
- Update payroll systems and budgeting forecasts.
- Communicate changes clearly to employees.
- Review contracts and policies to ensure alignment with the new rates.

The Guardian Employers Organisation is available to assist members with wage reviews, compliance checks, and related queries.

3. **Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace: Benefits and Pitfalls for Employers**

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the workplace is increasing rapidly. From drafting emails and analysing data to scheduling and customer support, AI has the potential to significantly change how work is performed.

Potential benefits of AI use

- Increased efficiency and productivity through automating routine tasks.
- Improved accuracy in data analysis and reporting.
- Cost savings through reduced manual workloads.
- Enhanced decision-making through access to insights and trends.
- Support for employees by freeing time for higher-value work

When implemented responsibly, AI can be a valuable tool that supports business growth and employee performance.

Potential pitfalls and risks

- Confidentiality and data protection risks, particularly when sensitive company or client information is entered into public AI tools.
- Accuracy concerns, as AI-generated information may be inaccurate or misleading.
- Over-reliance on AI, which may undermine critical thinking or skills development.
- Unclear accountability for errors or decisions made with AI assistance.
- Employment relations risks if AI use is not transparently communicated or fairly applied.

Best practice for employers

- Develop a clear workplace AI policy that sets out acceptable use, limitations, and responsibilities.
- Prohibit sharing confidential or personal information with unauthorised AI platforms.
- Ensure AI tools support, not replace, sound human judgement.
- Train employees in responsible and ethical AI use.
- Regularly review AI practices to ensure compliance with labour, privacy, and data protection laws.

The Guardian Employers Organisation encourages members to take a proactive and balanced approach to AI adoption, ensuring that innovation is matched by sound governance and legal compliance.

We look forward to working with you throughout 2026 and wish you every success in the year ahead.

Warm regards,
Andre Rabe
Chairman