

## **CLAS CIRCULAR**

### **2025/02 (04 February)**

#### **Disclaimer**

**CLAS is not qualified to advise on the legal and technical problems of members and does not undertake to do so. Though we take every care to provide a service of high quality, neither CLAS, the Secretary nor the Governors undertakes any liability for any error or omission in the information supplied.**

It would be very helpful if members could let us know of anything that appears to indicate developments of policy or practice on the part of Government or other matters of general concern that should be pursued.

<b>EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Increases in the National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage .....	2
<b>FAITH &amp; SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Compliance Checklist for Funeral Directors .....	3
<b>ODDS &amp; ENDS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Consultation on ransomware .....	4
<b>PROPERTY &amp; PLANNING .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme continued until 31 March 2026.....	5
<b>WALES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Welsh Government: end of business rates relief for fee-charging schools .....	6

## EMPLOYMENT

### Increases in the National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage

For information

The Government has [announced](#) increases in the National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage from 1 April as follows:

- The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over will rise from £11.44 per hour to £12.21 per hour.
- The National Minimum Wage for 18- to 20-year-olds rises from £8.60 to £10.00 per hour.
- The apprenticeship rate, and for 16- to 17-year-olds, rises from £6.40 per hour to £7.55 per hour.

[Source: HM Treasury, 4 February]

## FAITH & SOCIETY

### Compliance Checklist for Funeral Directors

For information **and possibly for action**

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published a compliance checklist for funeral directors, to make sure they are compliant with the requirements of the [Funerals Market Investigation Order 2021](#).

Areas covered by the guidance include rules for attended and unattended funerals, terms of business, disclosure of interests, prohibited practices, and additional services (such as the transfer of the deceased's body to and from a home or place of worship).

The full checklist can be found [here](#). It has also published a collection of information regarding the CMA's work with the funeral sector, which can be found [here](#). Funeral directors in breach of any of the items on the list must report the breach to the CMA via the email RemediesMonitoringTeam@cma.gov.uk. This must be done within 14 days of the breach.

[Source: Competition and Markets Authority, 21 January]

## ODDS & ENDS

### Consultation on ransomware

For information **and possibly for action**

The Home Office is consulting on proposals to reduce the threat posed by the criminal infection of computer systems with malicious 'ransomware' software.

Ransomware is malicious software (malware) that infects a victim's computer system. A ransomware attack can:

- prevent the victim from accessing IT systems or severely impair their use
- facilitate the theft of personal or other sensitive data held on the victim's networked systems or devices

A ransom is demanded (normally payment of cryptocurrency) from the victim to regain access to the system, for data to be restored or for confidential data not to be published on websites run by criminals.

The Home Office proposals being consulted upon are aimed at increasing the reporting incidence of ransomware attacks and reducing the amount of money being paid to them, deterring criminals.

The consultation can be found [here](#), and supporting documents can be found [here](#). The consultation will close on **8 April 2025**.

[Source: Home Office, 14 January]

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**PROPERTY & PLANNING****Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme continued until 31 March 2026**

<b>For information</b>
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Heritage Minister Sir Chris Bryant has [announced](#) that the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme will be extended until 31 March 2026. The terms of the Scheme have been modified, however; a listed place of worship will not be able to claim more than £25,000 during the financial year, though that can still be spread across multiple claims. Further, the total grant-aid for the Scheme has been capped at £23 million – in FY2024-25 it returned £29 million in VAT refunds.

CLAS has made several representations to DCMS and HM Treasury on the importance of the Scheme and has recently submitted evidence to the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee's forthcoming inquiry into protection of the built heritage.

[Source: UK Parliament, 23 January]

## WALES

### Welsh Government: end of business rates relief for fee-charging schools

For information

The Welsh Government is ending business rates relief for fee-charging schools whose students are not mostly there for special education needs.

All charities currently receive at least 80% relief from their non-domestic rates bills, including some fee-charging schools. Removing this tax break will bring independent schools with charitable status in line with other independent schools in Wales for the purposes of non-domestic rates.

The Scottish Government has already removed charitable relief from independent schools and the UK government is planning similar changes in England.

The change will come into effect on **1 April 2025**. A written statement on the subject can be found [here](#).

[Source: Welsh Government, 23 January]