Regional Social Security & Employment Regulatory Updates | GCC



News Alert Updates – October 2026

In brief

Social Security and Labor Ministries across the GCC continue to advance their regulatory and administrative frameworks to strengthen employee protection, enhance employer compliance, and improve employment and social security processes.

UAE

- GPSSA extends pension coverage to part-time UAE nationals.
- Sharjah Government Salary, Pension & Employment Measures.

Qatar

- Qatar clarifies wage dates under the Wage protection System (WPS).

KSA

- Qiwa clarifies employment of dependents of premium residency holders.

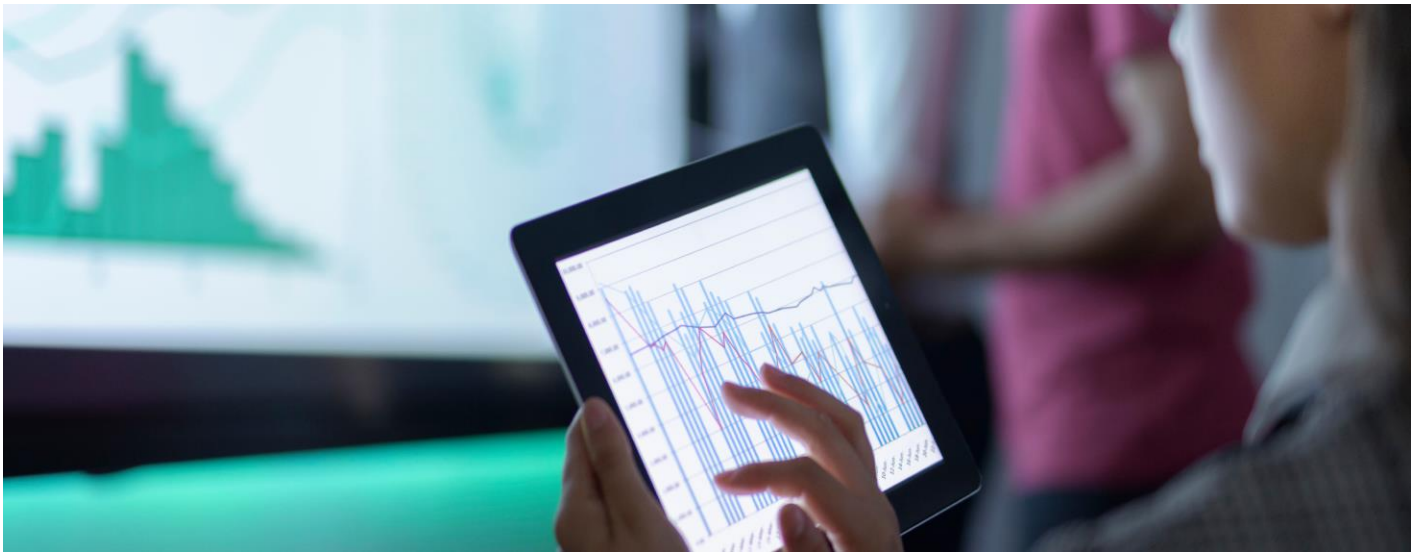
Oman

- Oman stops renewing work permits for expatriates above 60.

In detail

During Q3 2026, several key developments were announced across the region, affecting pension coverage and contribution compliance, wage protection requirements, employment of premium residency dependents, and work permit rules.

This alert provides an overview of key regulatory and administrative updates relevant to employers operating in the UAE, Qatar, KSA and Oman.



UAE | GPSSA Extends Pension Coverage to Part-time UAE Nationals

On August 19 2026, the General Pension and Social Security Authority (GPSSA) has extended pension coverage to UAE nationals working under part-time arrangements in government and private-sector entities subject to the federal pension laws. The framework applies where employees work 8–32 hours per week, or 1–4 days per week, representing 20%–80% of normal full-time working hours.

- ✓ The employee's pensionable service and benefits are calculated proportionately based on actual working hours and the applicable contribution calculation salary. The framework also supports continuity of pension service where an employee moves between full-time and part-time employment.

Key Considerations for Employers

- ☐ Employers should identify eligible UAE nationals working part-time and ensure that they are registered with GPSSA. Where an existing full-time insured employee moves to a part-time contract, the employer should update the employee's information through the Ma'ashi platform.

Purchase of Nominal Service Period | Increases the Monetary Value of the Pension

As part of its Pension Awareness Programme, GPSSA highlighted the "Purchase of Nominal Service Period" service, which allows eligible insured UAE nationals to purchase additional credited service.

Purpose and Key Benefits

This additional period is added to the contribution period and may:

1. Increase the service period considered when calculating the retirement pension.
2. Increase the pension amount by adding credited years of service.
3. Enhance retirement benefits and the insured individual's longer-term financial security.

Eligibility and Conditions

- The insured person must already have completed the minimum service period required to qualify for a retirement pension. The purchased period is therefore intended to enhance pension benefits rather than establish pension eligibility.
- Applicants must be UAE nationals covered by the applicable Pension and Social Security Law and actively employed when applying. The required cost must be paid in accordance with the applicable legal mechanism, and the period purchased cannot exceed the maximum limits prescribed by law.

Impact on Pension and Retirement Planning

Once approved, the purchased period is included in the insured person's contribution period for pension entitlement and other applicable insurance benefits. Because pension value is linked to the length of the contribution period, additional credited service may result in a higher retirement pension. GPSSA encourages insured individuals to review their insurance status and consider this service as part of their retirement planning.



Sharjah Government Salary, Pension and Employment measures

The Sharjah Government approved a series of measures relating to salaries, pensions and employment, effective from September 2026. The measures were announced in two rounds on 3 September and 7 September 2026 by His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah.

❖ Decent Living Standard

On 3 September 2026, the Ruler of Sharjah approved an increase in the standard of decent living for Sharjah Government employees to AED 20,000 per month.

❖ Salary Adjustments by Grade

On 7 September 2026, the Ruler approved further salary increases for 3,270 Sharjah Government employees in Grade 3, Grade 2, Grade 1, Special A and Special B. Under the general job system, each grade will receive a net monthly increase of AED 3,375 after insurance deductions, effective from September 2026. Salary adjustments were also approved under professional systems covering engineers, doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists and medical technicians. The increases cover employees across centralised and decentralised Sharjah Government entities, including universities.

❖ Pension Increases

The 7 September package approved higher pension payments for 1,470 Sharjah Government retirees, calculated according to grade. An additional 1,473 social-services beneficiaries will each receive an increase of AED 3,375 per month.

❖ Part-Time Employment Framework

A new part-time work system has been approved across Sharjah Government departments to provide 1,000 part-time government jobs for senior citizens, their spouses and retirees. The system offers two working arrangements: one or two hours per day, depending on the employee's ability, or three non-consecutive days per week with a rest day after each working day. The programme is intended to bring senior citizens out of isolation, involve them in community life and give them the opportunity to earn a wage while contributing to society.

❖ Recruitment Targets

The Government has directed Sharjah Government entities to accelerate the recruitment of 1,200 Emirati men and women during the remaining months of 2026, completing the emirate's target of 3,000 government jobs for citizens this year.

Key Considerations for Employers

Employers and relevant Sharjah Government entities should assess the employees and job grades covered by the revised salary arrangements, implement the applicable adjustments from the September 2026 payroll, and ensure that the related pension and social insurance deductions and contributions are calculated in accordance with the revised salary structure and applicable requirements.

Further announcements and detailed implementation guidance should continue to be monitored, particularly in relation to salary adjustments for further categories.

Qatar | New Wage Protection System Payment Deadlines

Qatar has introduced new requirements under the Wage Protection System (WPS), establishing specific wage due dates for different categories of workers. For employees paid monthly or annually, wages are due on the first day of each calendar month and must be transferred through WPS within seven days of the due date. For other workers, wages are due on the first day of every two-week period.

On 8 September 2026, the Ministry of Labor published Decision No. 50/2026, amends Article 2 of Ministerial Decision No. 4 of 2015 governing WPS.

Employee Category	Wage Due Date	WPS Transfer deadline
Employees paid monthly or annually	First day of each calendar month	Within 7 days of the wage due date
Other employees	First day of each two-week period	Within 7 days of the wage due date

Key Considerations for Employers

Employers should review their Qatar payroll calendars and WPS processes to ensure they align with the newly defined statutory wage due dates. Payroll timelines should allow sufficient time for salary transfers to be processed within the applicable WPS deadline.



KSA | Employment of Dependents of Premium Residency Holders

Ajeer has introduced a dedicated service enabling establishments in Saudi Arabia to contract with dependents of Premium Residency holders residing in the Kingdom, in accordance with the Saudi Labor Law and other applicable regulations.

Through the Ajeer platform, an establishment can issue a contract by selecting the permit type “Dependent of a Premium Residency Holder”, entering the dependants’ details and contractual information, and submitting the contract to the individual for approval. Following approval and payment of the applicable fees through SADAD, the relevant permit is issued. The applicable service fee varies depending on the required permit duration.

Social Insurance Treatment

The GOSI social insurance treatment of dependents engaged under the new Ajeer arrangement remains unclear. While Ajeer has confirmed the mechanism for establishments to contract with dependents of Premium Residency holders, the published guidance does not currently clarify whether, or how, individuals engaged under this specific permit should be registered with GOSI or whether social insurance contributions will apply.



Employer Considerations

Employers wishing to engage dependents of Premium Residency holders should ensure that the appropriate Ajeer contract and permit are obtained and that the engagement complies with the Saudi Labor Law and other applicable requirements.

Employers should also monitor further guidance from GOSI, Qiwa and Ajeer regarding the social insurance treatment and any related registration or contribution requirements for these individuals.

Oman | Work Permits for Expatriates Above Age 60

Recent reports indicate that Oman has stopped issuing and renewing work permits for expatriate employees above the age of 60, reversing the approach introduced in 2022 that had allowed expatriates to continue working beyond age 60. Employers have reportedly experienced rejection of renewal applications for affected employees.

The Oman Ministry of Labour continues to provide its general electronic service for the renewal of non-Omani work permits; however, its currently published service information does not expressly state an age-60 restriction. Accordingly, the practical application of the reported change and any exceptions should continue to be monitored pending further formal guidance from the authorities.

Key Considerations for Employers

Employers with expatriate employees who are approaching or above age 60 should review upcoming work-permit expiry dates before planning renewals and consider the potential impact on continued employment and residency arrangements. Further Ministry of Labor guidance should be monitored to confirm the scope of the restriction and whether any exemptions will apply.

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