Home Office

Right to Work

Right to work checks: what you need to know

Illegal working leaves people vulnerable to exploitation and results in unscrupulous employers undercutting compliant businesses.

All employers in the UK have a responsibility to prevent illegal working. You do this by conducting simple right to work checks.



From 1 October 2026, the Right to Work Scheme will expand to cover some self-employed individuals, as well as traditional employees. This includes individuals engaged as subcontractors and service providers who find work through online matching platforms. Businesses and individuals should check whether the new rules apply to their specific working or contractual arrangements.

There are 3 ways to carry out a right to work check:

1. A **manual** right to work check (all citizens)
2. A Home Office **online** right to work check (non-UK and non-Irish citizens)
3. A right to work check using a registered Right to Work **Digital Verification Service Provide**r (UK and Irish citizens only)

Those liable for illegal working may face a civil penalty of up to **£60,000** per illegal worker if the required checks have not been carried out. Knowingly employing or engaging an illegal worker is a **criminal offence**, carrying an unlimited fine and up to **five years' imprisonment.**

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There are a range of tools available on GOV.UK to support you in conducting right to work checks

Right to work checks: an employer's guide - GOV.UK
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide

Checking a job applicant's right to work - GOV.UK
https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work

Penalties for employing illegal workers - GOV.UK
https://www.gov.uk/penalties-for-employing-illegal-workers

If you need more help, you can also contact the Home Office:

Employer Enquiry helpline

Telephone: **0300 790 6268**
Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.45pm
Friday, 9am to 4.30pm
Call charges and phone numbers - GOV.UK
https://www.gov.uk/call-charges

Find us on Eventbrite

Right to Work Training:

To help **businesses and organisations understand their responsibilities** and stay up to date with the latest Right to Work requirements, the Home Office provides online **Right to Work training sessions**.

For further information or training enquiries, please contact:
ISCExternalTrainingTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk