



SOLVE IT HR MATTERS

HR Audit: An essential strategic tool for your business

As an independent HR consultant, our primary goal is to work in your business's best interests and help you to achieve your goals.

When we start working with you as a Strategic Partner, we need to understand how your business ticks, the risks it faces and the opportunities available to you.

And the most powerful tool we can use to help us do this is an HR Audit.

What is an HR Audit?

An HR Audit is a comprehensive review of your company through the lens of an experienced HR expert.

Once we understand your goals and what you're trying to achieve, we follow a structured approach to look at what's happening in your business.

What are the main benefits of having an HR Audit?

- **Peace of mind**

We'll ensure your company is legally compliant and protected against costly employment tribunal claims.

- **Data-driven decision making**

HR can often feel intangible. That's why we'll create HR Metrics, report on them and create a RAG-rated priority list of actions we need to take to help you to achieve your goals.

- **Customised and cost-efficient support**

Once we know what needs to be worked on, we can provide you with the best possible support and price to make it happen.

If you'd like to review your business's relationship with its employees and create the best possible action plan, please get in touch with us for a confidential chat today.



The traditional five-day work week, long seen as the standard, is increasingly viewed as outdated. Many attribute productivity problems to the rigid focus on hours and days rather than output and effectiveness.

A new 4-day week pilot project will launch this month, allowing companies to test the model along with other flexible working practices, such as flexible hours and nine-day fortnights. The results will be presented to Labour next year, with the hope that political support will grow for this shift in work culture.

It offers a potential solution to improve our work-life balance, increase productivity and make us happier and healthier. But can it be a "one size fits all" answer for every business?

<https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1887098/employment-law-perspectives-four-day-week>

The Autumn budget 2024



National Insurance

Two key changes. Employer NICs will increase by 1.2 percentage points from 13.8% to 15% and the threshold at which NICs start to be paid will be reduced from £9,100 per year currently to £5,000 per year. This will apply from the start of the next financial year, 6 April 2025.

Employment Allowance

The Employment Allowance currently allows businesses with employer NICs bills of £100,000 or less in the previous tax year to deduct £5,000 from their employer NICs bill. The government will increase the Employment Allowance from £5,000 to £10,500, and remove the £100,000 threshold for eligibility, expanding this to all eligible employers with employer NICs bills from 6 April 2025.

National Minimum and Living Wage

The NLW will increase by 6.7% to **£12.21 per hour** from April next year.

The NMW for 18–20 year olds increasing 16.3% to **£10 per hour** with the aim of closing the gap between the two and having a single adult minimum wage to be achieved 'over time'.

New Real Living Wage rates announced

The rates of the Real Living Wage for 2024–25 have been announced as **£13.85 an hour in London** and £12.60 an hour across the rest of the UK.

Benefits in kind

The use of payroll software to report and pay tax on benefits in kind will become mandatory, in phases, from April 2026, applying to Income Tax and Class 1A NICs.

The Employment Rights Bill

On 10th October, Labour introduced its Employment Rights Bill – the biggest overhaul of UK employment law in decades.

From the Prime Minister's office:

"Our Employment Rights Bill will ban exploitative zero-hours contracts, end fire and rehire, and introduce basic employment rights from day one."

"We're introducing new workplace rights to end unfair employment practices and help deliver economic growth."

This new Bill means some big changes for you:

1. Unfair dismissal rights from day one.
 2. Ending of fire and rehire.
 3. Ending 'exploitative' zero hours contracts
 4. Protection from sexual harassment
 5. Flexible working – state your grounds for refusal
 6. Changes to paternity, parental and bereavement leave
 7. Statutory sick pay from day one
- plus more.....

Although the new legislation is expected to come into effect in 2026, the Employment Rights Bill will mean some huge changes for your business.



The perks of the job...

A new study has revealed that nearly half of UK job adverts promote statutory requirements and basic amenities as workplace benefits. The study found that 46% of current job listings highlight legal entitlements, such as 'company pension' (124,589 mentions), '20 days holiday' (2,000 mentions) and 'statutory sick pay' (253 mentions), as key reasons to join.

Additionally, employers present standard amenities like free or on-site parking as perks, with mentions in over 161,000 ads. Basic offerings, like free tea (1,078 mentions), fruit (675 mentions) and even water, are also being marketed as benefits.

These perks do little to attract or retain top talent. Meaningful perks, flexible working and genuine support are needed to build a positive workplace culture that engages and retains employees.

<https://hrnews.co.uk/research-reveals-almost-half-of-uk-employers-disguise-statutory-rights-as-workplace-benefits/>



82% of managers and workers who entered management positions had not received proper training and were identified as 'accidental managers'. If not carefully managed, this can lead to low employee engagement, reduced productivity and a toxic workplace culture.

<https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1887801/two-five-employees-not-think-manager-trained-enough-survey-finds>



Why should you care about your employees' 'engagement'?

'Engagement' is an umbrella term we HR consultants use to describe your employees' enthusiasm, commitment and motivation towards their work and your business. Their levels of engagement have a direct impact on their performance and your bottom line.

That's why working on engagement within your business is really important. Now, with all things HR, it can easily seem quite intangible. But there's a really easy way to measure your team's engagement.

Engagement metrics not only help us to understand how engaged your team are, but they also help us to create benchmarks and report on improvements in the future.

- **Employee satisfaction surveys:**

These surveys provide insight into how employees feel about their work environment, management and overall job satisfaction.

- **eNPS (employee Net Promoter Score):**

This metric gauges employees' loyalty and willingness to recommend their workplace, clearly indicating overall engagement levels.

- **Turnover and retention rates:**

Monitoring how often employees leave or stay with the company helps assess engagement.

**Want to know how engaged your employees are?
Get in touch with us for a confidential chat.**



Questions & Answers

What's the difference between banter and bullying?

Banter is all about light-hearted, playful teasing that's mutual and doesn't cross the line—everyone's in on the joke and no one gets hurt. On the flip side, bullying is targeted, mean-spirited, and aims to upset or put someone down, often with a power imbalance in play. It keeps going even when the targeted person isn't okay with it. The big difference? Banter respects boundaries; bullying doesn't.

Can I force employees to use annual leave for Christmas when the business is closed?

Yes, you can require employees to use their holiday allowance when the business is closed, like at Christmas, but you've got to follow some rules. Check their contracts and give proper notice—usually, notice must be at least twice the length of the holiday. Just ensure you're on the right side of the law, communicate it clearly and you'll be good to go!

Do I have to offer flexible working?

You don't have to offer flexible working, but employees can request it. As an employer, you're legally required to consider these requests reasonably. Still, you can refuse if there's a valid business reason, like impact on performance, extra costs or difficulty meeting customer demand. Ensure you handle requests fairly and follow the correct process to avoid issues.

Let's talk on the phone

Retainer Services - cost-effective HR support and advice so you don't need to worry.

Pay as you go - flexible hourly support when you need it.

Project support - bespoke support on a wide range of HR issues.

Whether you're a business owner or an HR department that struggling with internal resources or expertise, let's have a chat. It may cost a lot less than you think.



Set up a 20 minute exploratory call at www.hrsolveit.co.uk



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