

# The hiring handbook: Overcoming recruitment risks with pre-employment checks



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# Introduction

Recruiting new talent for your business is no mean feat. Employers have to face many hurdles in the race to secure top talent. Finding qualified and experienced candidates, competing for talent with other businesses, and finding candidates that are the right cultural fit, to name a few.

One of the biggest issues that recruiting businesses face is ensuring that they understand exactly who they're hiring. All too often, businesses rush into recruiting a candidate before getting the full picture of who they are, and this is something the government has caught on to...

Fines for businesses who knowingly support illegal migrants are set to triple under new rules announced by the government. Coming into force at the beginning of 2024, businesses will see the civil penalty for employing illegal migrants rise from:

£

**£15,000**  
for the first offence to  
**£45,000**

Whilst repeat offenders will see fines triple to  
**£60,000**



**Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, stated:**

There is no excuse for not conducting the appropriate checks and those in breach will now face significantly tougher penalties.

With 4,000 civil penalties having been issued to employers for employing undocumented workers since 2018, the need for effective pre-employment checks is more than apparent.

So, we've put together a hiring handbook - a helpful guide to help employers gain a better understanding of pre-employment screening, the types of background checks available, and why they should play a crucial role in any recruitment strategy.



# The landscape of recruitment

The “Great Resignation” is a term used to describe the record number of employees who are quitting their jobs amid a post-pandemic rise in demand for better working environments and benefits...

The Office for National Statistics states that between June and August 2021 there were over a million people who moved jobs, with an all-time high of 400,000 choosing to resign.

Ultimately, this wave of workers has decided to change their jobs as they reconsider the priorities of their career. Unfortunately, this has left many employers short of staff, particularly if they operate in areas where they can't offer the same amount of flexibility as other employers.

The Great Resignation, paired with a shortage of qualified candidates, has turned the recruitment market on its head with businesses struggling to convince candidates to work for them. And, as a result, businesses are doing what they can to fill vacancies with whoever they can.

The issue with speeding up the recruitment process is that it increases the risk of something being overlooked. The recruitment process requires high attention to detail, and sometimes the smallest detail can be overlooked and cause a lot of hassle for the business further down the line.

Fortunately, there is a way for employers to keep the recruitment process speedy at the same time as being thorough, and it comes in the form of pre-employment screening!

## What is pre-employment screening?

Imagine this: You've invested thousands of pounds into attracting and interviewing the best candidates on the market. You desperately need someone to fill a vacant position that has been open for a while, and you're in a rush to get your top candidate through the door. So, you speed through the process and offer someone a job. But what if it turns out that the person you hire isn't who they claim to be? They don't have the right to work in the UK. Or they have unspent convictions you're not aware of. They've even lied about their previous employment.

So, where does this leave you? Unfortunately, in a pretty bad place. Not only will it land you in trouble with the law, but it means the vacancy you've been so eager to fill now reopens and you have to start the recruitment process from scratch and incur more costs. Not to mention the potential reputational damage your business could face.

Fortunately, this situation can be mitigated with a recruitment process that factors in pre-employment screening!

Pre-employment screening is the process of undertaking the relevant background checks to verify information provided by a candidate. It plays an essential part in ensuring you've fulfilled your legal obligations as an employer.

There are a variety of pre-employment checks that are available, but, out of all the background checking options available, many companies consider the DBS Check (formerly known as a CRB Check) to be the benchmark...

# What are DBS Checks?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides DBS Checks to enable employers to check prospective employees' criminal history.

There are three levels of check: Basic, Standard and Enhanced. The three levels have different eligibility requirements and reveal different information about the applicant.



### Basic:

A Basic DBS Check or Basic Disclosure will show any unspent convictions or conditional cautions the applicant has.



### Standard:

This check will show any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings the applicant has.



### Enhanced:

This check will show any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings the applicant has, as well as any other relevant information held by the police force.



## Why are they important?

By carrying out a DBS check, employers make safe recruitment decisions and prevent people from doing work they're unsuitable for.

DBS checks are commonplace in sectors like Care and Education, to ensure they're protecting vulnerable people, but the clarity they provide employers make them a popular choice across all industries. But that's not to say they're the only choice of pre-employment checks available.

Let's take a look at some of the other types of pre-employment checks typically used by businesses in the UK and why they're important...

# What is Digital Identity Verification?

Digital Identity Checks are a fully digital way to verify a prospective employee's identity. Instead of showing a physical identity document, they can provide the same information digitally.

Essentially, Digital Identity Verification puts the identity checking part of the recruitment process in the hands of applicants, saving you time on verifying documents manually.

Digital Identity Checks can verify identities to support Basic, Standard and Enhanced DBS Checks, authenticating documents like:



Passports



PASS cards



Driving licences



## Why are they important?

Using Digital Identity Verification to support your DBS checks, as opposed to carrying out a physical check, your business can benefit from:

- Speedier results
- Reducing human error
- The ability to check IDs from over 200 countries
- Overall, a more thorough check!

## What is a Right to Work Check?

Right to Work Checks are an essential part of the recruitment process, enabling employers to verify that potential employees are eligible to work in the UK.

The employer must check the applicable documents - for example, a passport or visa - to establish whether a prospective employee has a time-limited or permanent right to work.

Employers are required to do this before employing any person to make sure they are legally allowed to do the work in question.



### Why are they important?

You should never make assumptions about a person's eligibility to work in the UK or their immigration status. As an employer, it's your responsibility to carry out checks on all prospective employees.

Failing to conduct a Right to Work Check puts employers at risk of being fined by the Home Office. If this happens, you'll get a 'referral notice' to let you know your case is being considered and that you might have to pay a civil penalty (fine) of up to £20,000 for each illegal worker.

From 2024, these fines will rise further, meaning first time offenders will face a penalty of up to £45,000. Repeat offenders will face a fine of £60,000!

## What is an Adverse Credit Check?

An Adverse Credit Check will reveal any serious adverse credit history the applicant has.

'Adverse credit' refers to any late or non-payment on a person's credit history. The following types of adverse credit will show up on a financial probity check:

- **Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs)**
- **County Court Judgements (CCJs)**
- **Bankruptcy**

These checks can be an invaluable part of the pre-employment screening process, enabling you to make more informed recruitment decisions. They're especially useful for employees who will have access to cash, accounts, or valuables.



### Why are they important?

Adverse Credit Checks are a great way to ease any potential worries over staff fraud or dishonesty. For example, an employee who is shown to be economically vulnerable could be more open to accepting bribes, which could put your organisation at risk.



# What is an Identity Check?

Identity Checks are a type of electronic identification check designed to verify a prospective employee's identity. They do this by cross-referencing the applicant's personal information against data held on secure databases, including:

- Information held by credit referencing agencies
- Electoral roll
- Telephone databases



## Why are they important?

Did you know that 79% of household waste contains at least one item that could help fraudsters steal an identity?

In an ideal world, every candidate applying for a role would be truthful. However, that's not always the case and sometimes a person may not tell the truth about who they are.

With that in mind, identity checking is a crucial part of the recruitment process. An identity check can help protect your organisation from fraud and give you an extra level of confidence in the people who have access to sensitive information.





# How background checks can help avoid risks in recruitment

In an increasingly complex business landscape, it's now more important than ever for businesses to bring in the best talent. With businesses wanting to make informed and responsible hiring decisions, background checks act as a crucial tool to assess the suitability of potential employees.

With that being said, to carry out an effective background check, businesses need to fully understand the best practices surrounding background checks to help minimise risk and ensure compliance.

In a perfect world, every candidate would be truthful on a job application. That way, there would be little chance of businesses hiring the wrong person for the job. Unfortunately, that's not the case and it isn't uncommon for candidates to misrepresent themselves before, during, or after an interview.

To alleviate the risk of hiring the wrong person for the job, it's best practice for employers to conduct some sort of background screening. In fact, in some industries it's a legal requirement!

By not properly conducting background checks on potential employees, you can be putting your business at great risk. One of the main arguments against carrying out proper background checks is the price. Whilst there are small costs associated with these checks, they're insignificant compared to the cost of a bad hire.

In fact, a poor hire at mid-manager level with a salary of

**£42,000**

can cost a business more than

**£132,000!**

This happens because of all the costs that pile up during the recruitment process, such as training, onboarding, wasted salary and much more.

In addition to the costs directly associated with a bad hire, your business could also suffer consequences associated with a damaged reputation. For example, existing employees could suffer from a loss of morale and, in turn, reduced productivity if they believe their business is not doing their due diligence in scoping out potentially harmful candidates. On top of this, other businesses might not want to conduct business with a company with a tarnished reputation in fear of it damaging their own reputation.

Ultimately, background screening is a cost-effective way of ensuring that you make good hiring decisions, protect your reputation, and look out for those already under your wing.



## We're part of something bigger

You might already know us as a leading background screening provider for businesses across the UK. But did you know that we can also help boost your business in a number of other ways?

Here at uCheck, we're committed to providing our clients with the best possible service to help elevate their business. And as part of a larger group of businesses, we're able to offer services like:

- Cyber Security
- Workplace Training
- SSIP Accreditation
- Fire & Electrical Safety
- Employee Wellbeing
- ISO Certification

Not only that, but any client of a Citation Group business gets access to their very own dedicated HR & Employment Law specialist! They can help with anything from managing holiday leave to employee misconduct - all for free!

As you can see, working with uCheck is more than just a transaction. We're the business behind your business to get you set for anything!



# You're better off with uCheck

We're uCheck. We make background checks simple for over 30,000 organisations just like yours.

From our range of DBS and Right to Work Checks to Adverse Credit and Identity Checks, we're here to help you confidently make good recruitment decisions.

Our easy-to-use digital platform, Atlas, can provide you with instant results for most checks. And for more detailed checks like DBS, you'll never wait longer than two days... In fact, our record is just 13 minutes!

By making us your background screening partner, you can benefit from:

- Extra time on the clock with speedy pre-employment checks
- More bang for your buck by only paying for the checks you need
- A support team that's by your side and ready for anything

Ready to get started? Reach out to us today on **0300 140 0022** or at [info@ucheck.co.uk](mailto:info@ucheck.co.uk) and we'll be happy to help. Alternatively, you can get started by filling out this form on our website.