

Physical Right to Work checks undermine Government digital policy streams

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- UK workers disproportionately disadvantaged
- Undermines digital by design and digital identity strategies
- Goes against Build Back Better agenda

The decision to revert to face to face/original document right to work checks completely undermines the Government's own digital policy streams says employment trade body The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo). While the trade body has already written to the Home Secretary expressing its grave concerns, resulting in the Government delaying the re-introduction until 21 June, there is still no guarantee of the relaxation of restrictions and a return to physical workplaces by that date which makes the logistics of preparing for the change nigh on impossible.

"We also have grave concerns about the move away from what has been a highly workable and efficient remote checking process – a process which aligns perfectly with the Government's digital by design policy and the Department for Culture Media and Sport's digital identity strategy," says Tania Bowers, Legal Counsel and Head of Public Policy at APSCo. "A return to physical face to face checks completely undermines these two policy streams."

UK workers disproportionately disadvantaged – easier for employers to hire non-UK nationals

"There is also the issue of UK workers being disproportionately disadvantaged by this move. The Online Checking Service facilitates the checking of EU nationals via a share code and for non-EU workers via the Government Employer Checking Service – there is no such service provided by the UK Passport Office for UK nationals meaning it is now easier for employers to hire non-UK nationals."

"It would surely make far more sense for the Government to prioritise the expansion of digital checks – a process far more suitable for the modern world of flexible work – a return to physical checks that will not retain the flexibility needed in a hybrid working environment will not help organisations during this recovery period and goes against the Government's own digital strategies."

Prevention of an agile and flexible labour market – damage to economy

"A return to face-to-face checks will also prevent a modern agile and flexible labour market and stymie a work from home ethos by enforcing location-based hiring – we believe that this goes against the Government's Build Back Better agenda. While the Government has admitted that they are undertaking a review of the value of using specialist technology, including identity document validation, we do not understand why the status quo cannot be maintained while that review is undertaken."

"APSCo remains committed to engaging with Government to discuss these issues and will continue to lobby for change."

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