

Rate of second jobbers in the UK is growing – but not all employers are geared up to cope

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A growing proportion of the UK workforce is taking on second jobs as financial pressures continue to impact households, but few firms are prepared for the impact this may have on employee screening, onboarding, and management. That's according to specialist background screening firm Sterling.

In a recent analysis of the latest labour market data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), a 9% increase was identified in the number of workers with second jobs in the April – June 2024 data, when compared to the same period last year.

This steady rise in employees taking on second jobs or "side hustles" is indicative of UK workers looking at additional means to boost income as the cost of living remains high. According to Sterling, this trend may create a new challenge for employers and HR teams that are yet to adjust their hiring and onboarding procedures and processes accordingly.

Steve Smith, President, International at Sterling, explained:

“The rise of the second-jobber is something we’ve seen grow since the cost-of-living crisis first began. This trend doesn’t just benefit individuals, as it can also mean employers are able to attract a more diverse, flexible, and talented workforce. However, it can also pose risk to organisations who are hiring. Aside from the potential impact to productivity at work, it also has the added issue of possible breaches of confidentiality or misuse of company data that could expose firms to legal and financial risks. Few employers have set clauses in employment contracts that require staff to declare any second jobs they take on, and many of those that do haven’t implemented robust rescreening programmes to ensure this protocol is being followed.

“Aside from the need to clearly define the company’s stance on second jobs, employers must also consider how they are vetting employees as this trend continues. Rescreening current workers may be one way to identify where there are emerging risks of staff taking on a second job, but ensuring that new recruits are also vetted for potential employment elsewhere is going to become increasingly important. With flexibility key in the modern world of work, screening processes have to be equally agile or they will become outdated very quickly.”

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