



REC

Recruitment
& Employment
Confederation

Recruitment & Employment Confederation
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Association of Professional Staffing Companies Ltd
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Chris Philp MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
(Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice)

9 August 2021

By email only: immigrationminister@homeoffice.gov.uk

Dear Mr. Philp,

RE: Retention of digital right to work checks to include HM Passport Office digital checks

Further to our previous correspondence on the extension of digital Right to Work checks and most recently, our Freedom of Information request dated 22 July (copy enclosed), we write on behalf of our recruitment company members to urgently request that the Home Office extends digital Right to Work checks beyond 1 September 2021, until such time as a digital UKID solution is available. Further we urge the Home Office to prioritise the adaptation of a HM Passport Office digital check as part of the existing digital right to work checks.

We feel this is so important because of the disparity between UK nationals and other nationalities that will be created by a return to face-to-face checks from 1 September; foreign nationals can have their status checked via the UK Visa and Immigration digital service, whilst UK nationals are required to submit original documentation.

Our respective research supports the fact that the UK labour market is rebounding quickly, with noticeable staff shortages across all professional and non-professional sectors. KPMG and REC's [Report on Jobs](#) found that in both June and July, demand for staff rose at the highest rates in nearly 24 years. At the same time, there was an unprecedented fall in the availability of jobseekers. Recruiters noted that increased hiring, Brexit, pandemic-related uncertainty and the furlough scheme all weighed on candidate numbers. The latest REC [Jobs Recovery Tracker](#) also revealed that in the week 12-18 July, there was a total of 1.57 million active job adverts in the UK – higher than pre-pandemic levels. [APSCo's data](#) on this also shows similar trends.

Our members have been able to quantify how a reversion to in-person Right to Work checks for UK Nationals will make hiring and onboarding of these jobseekers complex and lengthy, particularly in less populated areas without easy access to recruiter offices. Vulnerable, lower-skilled, geographically remote, and poorer jobseekers will be disproportionately affected by this change. At a time when businesses are doing all they can to move on from the pandemic, we need government's support.



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We are aware that a trial of digital checks using HM Passport Office data has recently ended – this is rapid and significant progress. Given the opportunities presented by the current jobs market, we ask that the Home Office prioritise their analysis of the trial and move swiftly to implementing this or another system as a permanent alternative to original document checks of UK passports.

We are supportive of a permanent, adequately robust system being put in place and we will work with government to achieve this. But our view remains that until the new system is ready, we should maintain the current method of Right to Work checks for UK nationals. The evidence we have from hirers shows that the risks of maintaining the system for the short term are minimal.

Further, patterns of working have changed because of the pandemic and many companies will not be returning to the traditional office, with hybrid and agile working now the norm for many areas in the UK. Over the last 18 months, we have seen businesses and workers make great strides towards embracing new technologies and methods of working. It has also created new opportunities for those who need to work from home or who live in rural areas to be part of the workforce. These changes are here to stay and Right to Work checks should continue to enable this progress.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Tania Bowers
General Counsel and Head of Public Policy
APSCo

Kate Shoemith
Deputy CEO
REC

cc. Paul Scully MP