

The HR checklist for 10 to 50 staff

What to have in place as your team grows, and the milestones coming up. For UK small businesses. Updated October 2026.



LEGAL REQUIREMENT something the law says you must do

GOOD PRACTICE not required, but it makes growth easier

1. The foundations you should already have

- ☐ **A written statement for every employee**, given on or before their first day (the wider statement within 2 months). **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **A written health and safety policy**, shared with staff, plus the significant findings of your risk assessment recorded. Both apply from five employees. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **A fire risk assessment recorded in full** (England, any size). Check local guidance in Wales and Scotland. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Everyone assessed for a workplace pension**, with eligible staff enrolled and your declaration of compliance done. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Employers' liability insurance** of at least £5 million from an authorised insurer. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Right to work checks on file** for every employee, done before they started. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Disciplinary and grievance rules** referenced in your written statements, following the Acas Code of Practice. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**

2. Rules that apply at any size, but bite harder as you grow

- ☐ **Prevent sexual harassment**. You must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of your workers, including by customers and other third parties. From 30 October 2026 this becomes "all reasonable steps". Think risk assessment, a clear policy, training and an easy way to raise concerns. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Handle flexible working requests properly**. Employees can ask from their first day, and you must deal with requests in a reasonable manner. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Know the day-one rights from April 2026**. Statutory Sick Pay is payable from the first day of sickness, and paternity leave and unpaid parental leave are day-one rights. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Plan for shorter time limits**. Since 1 October 2026, people generally have six months, not three, to bring most tribunal claims about things that happened on or after that date. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **Get ready for 1 January 2027**. The qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal is due to drop from two years to six months, so fair, consistent processes matter much earlier. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**

3. Headcount milestones to know about

- ☐ **20 redundancies:** proposing 20 or more at one site within 90 days means collective consultation (at least 30 days for 20 to 99) and notifying the government on form HR1 before it starts. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **50 employees:** staff can formally request information and consultation arrangements. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**
- ☐ **250 employees:** gender pay gap reporting. Not one for now, but worth knowing. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT**

4. The structure that makes growth easier

- ☐ **Trained line managers.** Your first managers know how to run one-to-ones, return-to-work chats and probation reviews, and when to ask for help. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- ☐ **A short, plain-English handbook** covering holiday, sickness, pay dates, conduct and who to go to with a problem. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- ☐ **Job descriptions and a simple pay structure,** so people can see how roles and pay fit together. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- ☐ **An onboarding plan and probation reviews in the diary** for every new starter. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- ☐ **Regular one-to-ones and a yearly review,** so concerns surface early. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- ☐ **One secure place for people records,** checked against UK GDPR, instead of inboxes and drawers. **GOOD PRACTICE**
- ☐ **A few people numbers you look at monthly:** turnover, absence and open vacancies. **GOOD PRACTICE**

In care or early years? Your regulator expects more on top of this: CQC Regulation 19 staff records, or the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements. See thepockethr.co.uk/hr-support-for-care-homes.html and thepockethr.co.uk/hr-for-nurseries-and-early-years.html.

Want a second pair of eyes?

Book a free 20-minute call: cal.com/arrun-greaves-sgfygb/20min
Or the £395 HR Health Check: thepockethr.co.uk/services.html

Arrun Greaves, The Pocket HR

CIPD Level 7 · info@thepockethr.co.uk · 07387 082994
Croydon, working across the UK

General guidance for England, Scotland and Wales, not legal advice. Sources: GOV.UK (written statements, flexible working, redundancy consultation, Statutory Sick Pay); HSE; Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s2(3); Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg 3(6); Building Safety Act 2022 s156; Acas and EHRC guidance on preventing sexual harassment; Employment Rights Act 2025. Checked October 2026.