



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

Contents

Foreword..... 2

Introduction 3

Summary..... 4

Inquiry Questions:..... 5

Inquiry Responses: 5

1) Time to hire staff: 5

 What is your current process for hiring staff? 5

 What are the challenges in the process? 6

 What are the delays in the process?..... 7

 How can Digital ID Improve productivity? 8

2) Onboarding new staff 9

 What is the current process for screening new employees? 9

 What are the challenges in the process? 10

 What are the delays in the process?..... 10

 How can Digital ID reduce the time for employers to hire staff? 11

3) Supporting a modern and agile workforce in the UK 11

 For you, what is a modern and agile workforce? 11

 What are the challenges to creating a modern and agile workforce? 11

 What are the delays in the system to creating a modern and agile workforce?..... 12

 How can Digital ID support the UK’s agenda to have a modern and agile workforce?..... 12

4) Improving safeguarding for employers and employees 13

 What are the challenges in checking employees’ qualifications and records? 13

 What challenges do employees face in checking a future employer’s or recruitment company’s bona fides?..... 14

 What are the challenges that employers and employees face in this process?..... 15

 What are the delays that employers and employees face in this process? 15

 How can Digital ID improve safeguarding for employees and employers?..... 15

Conclusion..... 16

Participating companies:..... 16



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

Foreword



Foreword by APPG Chair – Dean Russell MP

It is my honour to write this foreword as the Chair of the APPG on Digital Identity, a role which I took on earlier this year. The Inquiry had already started under the auspices of my predecessor Eddie Hughes MP and fellow APPG Committee member Baroness Neville Rolfe and I would like to thank them for their dedication and work. The findings of the Inquiry have been given an urgency due to the impact of COVID-19. Despite the awful impact of Coronavirus globally there is no doubting it has also led society to look at how we work and the role of digital to enable society to continue to function effectively. This report provides concrete and practical policy recommendations on which, together with parliamentary colleagues, we will continue to work hard to explore how they may be enacted over the coming months and to support their outcomes.

The Inquiry has very much been based on Industry participation from HR and Recruitment organisations and those who lead these functions in companies. It is only too apparent that getting people back into work will need to be done in as quick and easy way as possible in the future. I would like to thank the individuals and organisations who gave their time and energy to complete the questionnaire and make their views known. They provided their expert and thoughtful views in a clear succinct manner and with a genuine passion for their industry and society as a whole. My grateful thanks also go to the Reed Screening who sponsored the Inquiry. Last but not least, thank you to Keith Rosser from Reed and Andrew Henderson, the APPG Secretariat, who wrote and co-ordinated the issuing of the questionnaire and put together this report based on the findings. I am hopeful you will find this report as enlightening as I have done and encourage you to join the Digital ID APPG for future exploration on these important topics.

Dean Russell MP



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

Introduction

I was very pleased to be asked to write the introduction to such an important Inquiry. Short term changes to regulatory guidance in the COVID labour market have enabled businesses to continue to operate through the implementation of digital or remote recruitment. What I call Digital Hiring will be essential for the UK's post COVID economic recovery. By Digital Hiring I mean the ability for all sectors in the UK to recruitment talent digitally, removing the need for slow and less safe face to face checks.

The UK labour market has been changed by COVID. The way businesses operate has been changed by COVID, and even after the recovery business will look different, needing to be more agile and modern. In response, we need an agile and modern labour market built on Digital Hiring that enables employers to hire quickly, safely, and remotely, and enables workers to have flexibility in where and how they work.

Digital Hiring has multiple benefits: improve safeguarding through the use of digital identity and therefore reduce the likelihood of people without right to work or the appropriate qualifications to get work, especially with vulnerable people, improve UK productivity by reducing waste times for businesses hiring new staff and therefore reduce workload and waiting lists, improve the economy by enabling people to find work faster and therefore pay taxes sooner, improve wellbeing by enabling people to apply for jobs remotely and work remotely in roles (both permanent or "gig") that suit them, and improve safety for job seekers who are commonly duped by fake recruitment scams.

The current Right to Work legislation enforces face to face checks which anchor the UK labour market in the past. This does not equal better safeguarding or security (as humans find it difficult to be sure about the validity of documents), except in the case of the Online Checking Service (OCS). This enables employers to check the right to work status of non UK citizens online. In a post Brexit Britain that has created a situation where employers can recruit non UK citizens more easily and quickly than UK Citizens, creating the opportunity for employers to discriminate by offering roles to non UK citizens more quickly.

The timing of this Inquiry is vital, the benefits are clear, the UK needs a digitally enabled labour market to catch up with many countries such as the Netherlands where this has long been the case, and to drive UK growth out of the COVID pandemic.

Keith Rosser, Director Reed Screening & Group Director, Reed Global



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

Summary

The Inquiry started just before the Covid lockdown. Thanks to Covid the guidance around the regulatory regime for checking Right To Work (RTW) documentation has changed. With people no longer allowed to travel and the bulk of the population home working, it was no longer possible to have face to face checks. Indeed producing the necessary documentation became difficult for many people as they were unable to obtain replacements quickly for lost documentation. This has driven the adoption of a temporary and digital approach to right to work checks.

The Inquiry has discovered that RTW checks consist of reviewing and verifying a range of documents. Whilst all correspondents have a well-established process for doing the checking there is a clear opportunity to improve this by the use of digital identity. Some of our correspondents are national recruiters and others large companies with offices scattered around the UK which provide a network of local meeting points for checking documents. Not all the correspondents had a nationwide network of offices and supplemented this by using public meeting places to meet candidates.

The general tone was that document checking is slow, prone to delays and is not error-proof. These delays might be caused by mislaid documents, candidates forgetting to bring them to interview or having to re-order them from an overseas location. The errors creep in because the recruiter is unfamiliar with the document or unable to detect counterfeits as this is a complex area. Copies of the documents have to be stored to provide an audit trail. The methods of storage of those documents is very fragmented.

Digital ID is generally viewed as a key part of turning the labour market into a more modern and agile one. It will facilitate people moving jobs more easily and will make the RTW process quicker and more efficient. This will save both cost and time hence facilitating people moving jobs or starting work more quickly with the attendant benefits to employers and the economy. Indeed, in a post COVID recovery it will become essential to offer flexibility to the public and employers especially as restrictions may remain in place for some time.

Fraudulent recruitment / training websites were both raised as RTW and Digital ID issues. These exist either to harvest personal details from a CV or to extract payment for non-existent services. As traditionally people have been used to submitting lots of paper (or copy) documents in the process of getting a job this allowed fraudsters to mimic the role of an employer to steal people's identity. This latter fraud is aimed particularly at lower skilled / paid workers seeking to improve their qualifications and skills. The SAFERjobs (www.safer-jobs.com) initiative has been set up by the Metropolitan Police with cross government support to help combat this.

The other fraud is where an employee purports to have qualifications which they do not actually have. Recruiters highlighted that they rely on 3rd Parties to confirm proof of qualification / training. Some of these do not operate online thus delaying the process of verification and others may be overseas which can make comparison of qualifications and their verification very difficult.

In sum the Inquiry found that Digital ID will help improve processes by cutting the time needed to perform what are mostly routine tasks. It will also help to remove some avenues for fraud by allowing candidates to identify websites and recruiters to perform many of the checks needed



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

electronically. It will improve safeguarding by ensuring fake identity documents are not accepted, as well as improving productivity and reducing waste time as waiting lists and workloads build whilst there are delays in the process. This implies common standards to underpin such a system such as the BSI's PAS499¹. It also means giving digital ID parity with current physical methods of proving identity that would allow both to be used with equal validity as well as opening up some Government databases so that documents can be verified, even at the basic level of whether they are valid or not.

Inquiry Questions:

The Inquiry is based on four questions:

- 1) Time to hire staff
- 2) Onboarding new staff
- 3) Supporting a modern and agile workforce in the UK
- 4) Improving safeguarding for and employers and employees

In general, the first two questions followed the same pattern. They asked correspondents to outline the current processes, the challenges delays which they encountered and how Digital ID would help to address the last two points.

The third question looked at how the UK's workforce can evolve. It asked correspondents to think about what "modern" and "agile" mean and then look at the challenges, delays and how Digital ID can help move the UK workforce on.

The fourth and final question looked at issues around safeguarding the recruitment process. It asked recruiters to think about the process challenges and then those faced by employers and employees and then how Digital ID could help.

Inquiry Responses:

1) Time to hire staff:

What is your current process for hiring staff?

Hiring processes are relatively linear and straightforward. The average hiring time is 10 weeks.

Firstly, candidates are engaged via a resource. This could be internally, one correspondent uses an operations centre in Leicester and others outsource to a Recruitment Process Outsource (RPO) service or from job boards, referrals from other candidates or from

¹ <https://www.huntswood.com/insights/pas-499-published>



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

approaches using social media. The RPO typically offers a service that involves advertising for roles, sourcing candidates, organising the selection process and onboarding candidates etc.

Secondly, once candidates have shown interest they are then invited to interview, either in person at an office or at a location that is convenient and secure to both parties. Some recruiters have networks of local offices and are able to interview in these. Correspondents all reported that candidates are rigorously screened for competency, ability and suitability for the role(s) they are keen on before beginning the compliance and onboarding process. Screening is usually handled from a central point within the hiring or recruitment company.

Compliance and onboarding consist of robust and detailed checks related to the candidate's personal identity, suitability to work with vulnerable people, proof of address and any referee details. An original copy of the individual's passport is requested during the original meeting. One correspondent reported that a photo of this is captured on a dedicated compliance mobile phone which is then verified upon return to the office.

During the compliance process, candidates are discussed with clients and submitted to open opportunities via the relevant vendor platforms. Clients then request interviews, provide offers and engage candidates via the platform, with each candidate having to pass a compliance audit before starting in any assignment including any individual authority documents including Health/Criminal/Data Protection declarations. APSSco² were cited as one trade body which supplies a set of rules for recruiters: Compliance+. This process is structured in a way that covers all areas of safeguarding for children and young people.

One commentator summed up as follows: *During COVID-19 we were able to move to a virtual process with all registration and ID checking being completed by utilising a video interview technology with the candidate. This has allowed us to centralise this important compliance role so that one highly trained team, equipped with the right technology can conduct these vital checks for the whole business. This not only saves candidates the time and expense of attending branch locations (which in some cases can be over an hour away from their homes) and increases compliance, but also means that consultants can focus on upskilling, training and preparing candidates for job interviews.*

What are the challenges in the process?

Multiple challenges were reported:

1. Geographical – recruitment is often countrywide. There are issues with candidates either not arriving for interviews, forgetting documents or being unsuitable. This is highlighted with the current Covid-19 pandemic where it has become impossible to meet candidates in person due to restrictions. These same were sometimes key

² <https://www.apsco.org/>



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

workers needed to support the Public Sector. Meeting candidates face-to-face to do the document check was repeated again and again as a major challenge..

2. Environmental: Travelling up and down the country every day has a significant impact on the environment as we are regularly asking individuals to travel utilising the most cost effective, efficient means available. This generates a lot of car traffic in particular. One correspondent cited candidates having to travel 60 to 90 miles to an office to present their documents.
3. Business Effectiveness: face to face meetings outside the office can mean that the business suffers as staff are not fully productive as they are spending time commuting between locations/meetings and enough time needs to be scheduled for the hiring managers to complete relevant sections of the process
4. Candidate documentation: The requirement is for all candidates to provide original right to work and proof of address documents. Should they forget to bring all or some of the documents to interview or the manager forgets to copy them, they need to make another trip to the office, potentially delaying start date in new role and therefore detrimentally impacting productivity in the organisation. One correspondent reported that this adds 3-4 working days to the process.

Checking that the documentation is original is a major challenge. One correspondent also mentioned that more and more right to work documents were being digitised with access online.

What are the delays in the process?

There are several inefficiencies in the recruitment process, predominantly caused by:

- Human error – both candidate and internal compliance forgetting documents or not processing them correctly. Candidates can lose or mis-place documents which builds in a delay whilst replacement ones are obtained.
- Loss of working time/productivity
- Candidates providing unsuitable/incomplete documents
- Unable to track delivery/opening of emails, etc
- Manually/physically providing documentation
Delays with external providers (DBS, etc) One respondent cited the DBS process taking 100 days as a worst case example.
- Certifications are often sent physically to the candidate who must then send them onto the recruiter which adds in several days of delay.



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

Delays mean that candidates can miss an opportunity, especially if it is a temporary one or the employer having to delay matters until a candidate is fully checked.

How can Digital ID Improve productivity?

Digital ID Checks would allow recruitment/business to focus on the candidate journey, retention and reward, instead of being bogged down in costly, inefficient processes. In some cases, audit/compliance packs for some clients can take over a week to complete due to the need to request additional information, clearer scans/copies and delays in applying for references. Allowing the remote verification of right to work and proof of address documents will improve the time for candidates to start in role.

Digital Compliance processes are widely used in the NHS (such as TrustID) and other public sector bodies although this does not replace the need to conduct face to face RTW checks. The digital solution has to be used alongside the face to face process for Right to Work checks. This slows down the process. It is another example of the legislation being behind the realities of what is being used. Allowing private businesses to utilise this would improve adherence to compliance standards (especially for off framework/contract brands). This will be a good development for the market allowing industry and business to access talent quickly and provide a good candidate experience, whilst enabling the Public Sector to have key roles filled in the shortest amount of time

The introduction of digital instead of physical face to face checks has the following benefits:

1. Reduced time to hire – removing travel time and inconvenience speeds up the process enabling candidates to find work and businesses to fill their vacancies faster
2. Improving compliance – a digital process allows us to centralise document checks and ensure they are carried out by a central team of specially trained individuals who can dedicate their time and attention specifically to this requirement
3. Improve visibility – digital technology allows a candidate to upload their documentation directly. This means the candidates documents are held securely and can be verified prior to them completing the hiring process and creates an auditable trail which clients can view on demand giving clients greater visibility and assurance.
4. Enhanced fraud detection and prevention – the digital technology used by the Adecco Group validates the authenticity of documents with a lower margin for error than the human eye, and therefore minimises the possibility of immigration fraud; and
5. Secure technology – allows us to safely store documents and create an on-line auditable trail which can provide greater assurance to both candidates and clients.
6. Improve efficiency in the labour market with idle time reduced meaning workers start employment sooner improving UK productivity and generating taxes earlier.

Commented [KR1]: I have been thinking about this paragraph. I am not sure it makes complete sense. Trust ID is for digital ID only, it does not solve the face to face RTW issue. Some private sector businesses do use Trust ID and equivalents already, but often don't because they still need to do F2F RTW checks anyway.

Commented [AH2R1]: I have amended it, does this now make more sense. The point came out of one of the questionnaires.



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

To quote one correspondent: *in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic we have reduced our time to get our candidates out to work by days; we no longer have to wait for a worker to attend one of our offices to provide documents to allow us to introduce them to our clients.*

To quote another: *Digital ID can immensely improve our process. With online checks it would support safe and efficient turnover, in compliance checks and would aid us in supporting more individuals gain paid employment. Online systems I have used, in my experience, are a safer way of recruiting due to ingenious implementations that are able to detect counterfeit documents and can prevent unsafe individuals gaining employment in settings with vulnerable people. Online systems should absolutely be the way forward, not only because of their accuracy and efficiency but also because it reduces a large amount of paper used throughout the year.*

2) Onboarding new staff

What is the current process for screening new employees?

- Some correspondents used a 3rd party provider to complete pre-employment screening. One reported giving new joiners access to an onboarding portal and having regular touch points with them up to their first day.
- For those that do the screening themselves the process is broadly:
 - Referrals are from colleagues in other businesses or from approaches using social media.
 - At the interview stage candidates are rigorously screened for competency, ability, and suitability for the role(s) before beginning the compliance and onboarding process.
 - Compliance and onboarding consist of robust and detailed checks related to the candidate's personal identity, suitability to work with vulnerable people, proof of address and any referee details. An original copy of the individual's passport is requested during the original meeting. A photo of this is captured on a dedicated compliance mobile phone which is then verified upon return to the office.
 - During the compliance process, candidates are generally provided with all the equipment necessary to undertake their role with us and preparations are made to ensure that system access, etc is provided on day one. On the employees first day they are taken through an induction process commensurate with their role.
 - Compliance standards are a mix of industry standard compliance guidelines or compliance guidelines specified by the client.



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

New joiners cannot start without screening and this typically involves RTW, Proof of Address, Sanctions, PEP, CIFAs, Adverse Media, Criminal Record (DBS and Disclosure Scotland) and employment/education checks.

What are the challenges in the process?

Geographical: nationwide recruitment raises issues of safety, practicality and cost. There are also issues with candidates either not arriving, forgetting documents or being unsuitable.

Environmental: we aim to become a paperless office in 2021 and we are trying to educate third parties (vendors, clients. etc) about our mission by trying to reduce our use of printed time/expense sheets, providing contracts that require an electronic signature and conducting remote/paperless audits.

Business Effectiveness: being able to approach, engage and onboard talent quickly in the current climate is vital to our future success as a business. Given the scale of our future growth plans and our need to pivot into new markets/verticals, accessing new talent is key and providing a good candidate experience can make all the difference.

Staff training: staff have to be trained in understanding what documentation is acceptable, how they might spot a 'fake' document, and to ensure they are kept up to date with changes in legislation and Right to Work requirements for non-EU citizens (which will become increasingly complex from January 2021).

One correspondent cited the completion of Protecting Vulnerable Groups³ risk assessments. At present, any convictions on a PVG, regardless of the length of time since the conviction happened require a PVG risk assessment. The recruiter's copy of the PVG gets posted 10 working days after the applicant's copy to allow them time to appeal anything on the PVG but this greatly slows up the process. Then, when a copy of the PVG is received, a PVG risk assessment needs to be done. Once this is done it needs to be reviewed and signed off by two layers of management before it can go ahead. This whole process can take 4-6 weeks under normal circumstances and longer if there is additional information required.

What are the delays in the process?

There are several inefficiencies in the recruitment process, predominantly caused by:

- Human error – both candidate and internal compliance
- Loss of working time/productivity
- Candidates providing unsuitable/incomplete documents

³ <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme/>



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

- Unable to track delivery/opening of emails, etc
- Manually/physically providing document
- Delays with external providers (DBS, etc)
- Non-responsive candidates
- Staff may not know all of their client's requirements as regards documentation

How can Digital ID reduce the time for employers to hire staff?

Not requiring a candidate to attend an office appointment to provide an original copy of a document will let the recruiter initiate the screening checks that are required more quickly and in most cases on the same day. This will drastically reduce the time between making an offer and candidate starting work.

If interviews and Right To Work checks can be done online this would save a lot of time and cut out delays in processing applicants.

One correspondent was very clear that digital ID would aid employment levels in the UK.

3) Supporting a modern and agile workforce in the UK

For you, what is a modern and agile workforce?

With the creation of more and more "direct sourcing" models and hybrid MSP type agreements there seems to be a trend away from larger MSP type solutions which tend to give a very one size fits all model, allowing for very little innovation. Many young people coming into the work environment are keen to utilise their skills across as wide a variety of settings as possible, fuelling the gig economy and changing the face of employment in this country for the foreseeable future. In fact, the World Economic Forum published a report in January 2020 outlining what the "new normal" for platform/gig workers was likely to do with, along with potential pitfalls/opportunities⁴.

What are the challenges to creating a modern and agile workforce?

- Lack of understanding around what modern/agile means. The consensus amongst respondents is that it must be technology-based.
- Outdated recruitment and resourcing practices
- Inability to grasp the implications of new working practices
- Over-reliance on outdated technology/equipment
- Knowledge of what the practical applications are for businesses as it will mean a change to "normal" working practices.
- Lack of support for those in the self-employed/gig economy workforce

⁴ <https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/the-promise-of-platform-work-understanding-the-ecosystem>



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

- Changing the workforce's mindset
- Transforming business processes to meet new demands and ways of working.
- Updating technology to support the process changes and new ways of working, for example through the introduction of digital solutions.
- Communication with candidates, clients and colleagues
- The time taken to process applications means, in the Care Sector, that vacancies cannot be filled quickly enough.

What are the delays in the system to creating a modern and agile workforce?

Clearly systems need to be brought up to date to cope with technology advances. The Covid pandemic has moved matters on by teaching business a valuable lesson in that employees can function anywhere in the country if they have access to the right technology, the freedom to work flexibly around children/commitments and the support of colleagues and managers.

The prevailing orthodoxy is under serious challenge with the majority of businesses reluctant to continue to pour vast sums of money into expensive office space, especially when this could be used to improve productivity and effectiveness by providing learning opportunities and career development.

Typically, delays can occur if organisations do not have the infrastructure to adopt a digital process. Moreover, remote locations in the UK not having adequate internet service and or mobile phone signal can also cause delays in the adoption of new working practices.

The DBS system was cited as taking 100 days. At worst, the majority of checks take between 21 and 50 days, often getting stuck at stage 4.

How can Digital ID support the UK's agenda to have a modern and agile workforce?

"Talent pool" technology has emerged from a concept into a viable replacement to the traditional recruitment market, this was bred by and has subsequently bred, greater advances in Digital ID technology and its applications. As more organisations become familiar with Digital ID products so this will ensure that those gig/platform economy workers will be able to demonstrate their value.

The value to business is fourfold:

- Quicker time to hire
- Ability to manage demand effectively



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

- Reduced cost of compliance
- Smoother process ensuring clients have a more direct communication route to candidates
- Ability to re-engage at anytime

These changes will enable hiring organisations to become inherently more modern and agile as they only engage the talent that they need when they need it.

From the employee viewpoint, this will create a more flexible workforce which can move between companies and roles in a much shorter timeframe.

Candidates are more aware of GDPR and want to ensure their data is safe and only want to provide data that is essential to them securing a role.

One correspondent cited their “Customer Centricity programme” as a way in which technology allows them to focus “on capturing what our candidates and clients are looking for from an employer or labour partner and adapting our recruitment processes where possible to meet those requirements.”

Another correspondent, in the Care Home sector stated: *In the current climate we were unable to progress a candidate’s application because they had lost their birth certificate and the NRS was not issuing new certificates. In a time of crisis when we’re recruiting heavily, employers and applicants would benefit from a centrally held record of this information that is open to employers (similar to how we complete a driving license check online using a unique code).*

4) Improving safeguarding for employers and employees

What are the challenges in checking employees’ qualifications and records?

As we know from the recently revealed scandal at an NHS Trust in the South West, a committed fraudster will always attempt to persuade, cajole and manipulate their way into or out of providing evidence of qualifications.

However, a digital ID/compliance process can provide an additional layer of safeguarding/security against those that would look to undermine the checks and balances necessary to ensure a safe, compliant and appropriate workforce. Digital ID solutions should not be used as the sole or only tool but as part of a suite of safeguards to ensure that every check is robust and accurate, giving confidence to hiring managers and organisations.

Using 3rd party organisations increases risk in that one is reliant on 3rd Parties to supply accurate and true information.

Not every institution is online, so checks need to be done in writing and by post.



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

In the Care Homes sector, certificates need to be seen and validated. The SSSC⁵ regulates this so verification is relatively straightforward.

What challenges do employees face in checking a future employer's or recruitment company's bona fides?

Correspondents commented that job scams (fake employment sites, fake training sites etc) are a threat to employees. These particularly target lower skilled workers. Despite recent recommendations by the Taylor Review and additional enforcement powers made available to the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, online and app-based recruitment is a large, emerging threat which sits outside of the regulatory framework. Whilst it is becoming harder for legitimate UK-based recruitment agencies to practice unethically in recruitment, it is becoming easier to circumnavigate the rules by becoming an app based, online platform, or other innovative organisational form. The community interest company, SAFERjobs, sees numerous new online recruiters targeting work seekers every week. During the COVID pandemic these explicitly targeted key workers and campaigns such as Pick for Britain.

Changes to procurement such as with Local Authority contracts are helping by ensuring agencies are contractually required to use accredited umbrella providers who have committed to stringent audit requirements, further reducing the margin where unethical providers are able to operate. However, this has prompted a rise in new employment models such as Direct Engagement and PEO which are currently being understood in terms of whether or not they pose a risk to vulnerable workers.

These changes combined with increasing use of social media and review sites as well as awareness of individual rights and responsibilities mean that there is a greater knowledge of the roles/requirements that hiring organisations should be adhering to. A recent example of this is the BEIS-backed initiative, ASCOR (www.theascor.org) which brings together for the first time help and advice for everyone in the flexible labour market covering all worker types from zero hours to people in the multi-apping economy. This is a highly complex area with new forms of employment and/or worker status developing all the time.

Recruiters typically ask candidates to show their original document, however most recruiters are not qualified document checkers for every provider in the UK (and world) and so are required to either reference the provider or use an online checking service to validate the document where one exists. This negates the need for the original document and adds time to the process.

⁵ <https://www.sssc.uk.com/>



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

What are the challenges that employers and employees face in this process?

Understanding and interpreting what is guidance, what is legislation and what is best practice. There are already multiple instances of candidate quoting either their own interpretations or what they have heard through word of mouth, which is either outdated or out of context.

Candidates continue to learn and understand their value in a changing marketplace and clients are still trying to understand the new landscape, realise the benefits and opportunities that this can bring but this (inevitably) brings conflict and misunderstanding. The employment agency respondents saw it as their duty to inform, educate and signpost candidates and hiring organisations to the right information, ensuring that they have access to good quality information in order to make sound, evidenced based decisions.

The increasing use of fake job sites, sometimes masquerading behind a well-known brand is a concern. The SAFERjobs initiative⁶ aims to mitigate the risk of “fake” job adverts which mis-uses established brands to create confidence and lure people into a trap.

Educational institutions and employers failing to provide references or not doing so in a timely manner.

Turnaround times for completing criminal record checks and the onerous documentation which is needed to complete criminal checks (via DBS and Disclosure Scotland)

What are the delays that employers and employees face in this process?

Adopting/onboarding and an initial reluctance from hiring organisation/candidates to the technology could prolong the widespread use of digital compliance/ID checking solutions. However, I think that successful usage and deployment of any solution will increase its attractiveness to new users. As the solutions embed and evolve there will be further adaptations and evolutions that will continue to drive engagement and add value to all parties, leading to greater and greater engagement.

How can Digital ID improve safeguarding for employees and employers?

The responses were supportive of using digital ID. One respondent saw it as part of a mix to be used in conjunction with some traditional methods (verbal confirmation of references, recorded screening interviews and hard ID checks) to give an added layer of confidence and protection.

⁶ <https://www.safer-jobs.com/>



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital ID

In general respondents see the use of Digital ID as adding robustness and speed to the recruitment process. It is also viewed as enhancing the management of employees' / candidates' personal data. Documents could be held by a recruiter in one place and accessed by staff rather than having multiple copies spread around. The auditability of digital ID checks was also raised as introducing an important safeguard into the process.

One respondent stated that there needed to be a better understanding of the value added by Digital ID.

Conclusion

The Inquiry believes that Digital ID can form a valid alternative to current, paper-based processes. The Inquiry therefore calls for the following:

- 1) A full review of Sections 15 to 25 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 to change the requirements for right to work checks to rely on the checking of physical documents to be replaced by digital checks as set out in this document.
- 2) Adoption by UK Government Agencies and particularly the Home Office of parity in the use of Digital ID and paper-based ID documents. This will entail re-writing guidelines such as the *AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS 2019*;
- 3) Opening of the UK Passport, Drivers Licence and General Registry databases to check the validity of UK passports, drivers licences and birth / marriage certificates.
- 4) Removal of any requirements on identity documents to have a particular feature that cannot be replicated digitally such as an Ultra Violet or Holographic security feature which then excludes a digital ID.
- 5) Governmental guidance to align all paper based ID checks (where required by law) to be replaced by digital ID checks.

Participating companies:

The APPG would like to thank all the companies and individuals who participated in this Inquiry. Amongst those are:

Reed Recruitment

Agenda Resource Management™ Ltd.

Diverse Rec Limited t/a Social Personnel

The Adecco Group UK & Ireland

TSB

Vitality

In particular the APPG would like to record its thanks to Reed Recruitment for sponsoring the Inquiry.