

HR Foundations Checklist

20 practical checks for small UK businesses (1–50 employees) to see where your HR foundations stand today, and what's worth tackling next.

Seed — Hiring & Onboarding

- Every new hire receives a written contract before or on their first day
- Job offers are made in writing, with clear terms (pay, hours, probation length)
- You run right-to-work checks on every new employee, every time
- New starters get a simple, consistent first-day induction
- Probation periods have a clear review point, not just an end date

Sapling — Standing on Their Own

- You have a written probation and performance review process
- Employees know who to go to with a question or concern
- Basic policies exist in writing: absence, holiday, disciplinary and grievance
- New managers get at least basic guidance on handling people issues
- You know the difference between a formal and informal conversation, and when to use each

Growing — Full Bloom

- You run regular, documented performance conversations (not just annual reviews)
- Pay and benefits are consistent and explainable across similar roles
- You have a clear absence management process, including return-to-work conversations
- Employees have some path for development or progression, even informally
- You know your legal obligations around holiday pay, pensions and working time

Fruit — Ready for What's Next

- You have a fair, documented disciplinary and grievance procedure
- Exit conversations happen for every leaver, not just the difficult ones
- You know the difference between resignation, dismissal and redundancy processes
- References are handled consistently and fairly
- You've reviewed your risk of an employment tribunal claim in the last 12 months

How did you do? If you ticked most boxes, you've got solid foundations, well done. If a few sections felt thin, that's completely normal, and exactly where a short conversation can help you prioritise what to tackle first.



Book a free 20-minute call at cal.com/arrun-greaves-sgfygb/20min

No obligation, just a conversation about where your business is and what would help most. Scan the QR code or tap the link above.

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This checklist is general guidance and does not constitute legal advice.