

If you're running a startup or small business, HR often grows "as you go".

You might have:

- ✓ a contract template you used for your first hire,
- ✓ a couple of policies saved somewhere,
- ✓ an informal way of handling sickness and holidays,
- ✓ managers doing their best with people issues without a consistent approach.

And then something triggers a pause, a difficult conversation, an absence pattern, a performance issue, a resignation, or simply the realisation that your business has grown and your HR hasn't kept pace.

### **That's where an HR Health Check can help.**

An HR Health Check is a practical review of the key HR essentials in your business, your documents and the day-to-day processes that sit behind them, followed by a clear plan of what to fix first. It's designed to reduce risk, improve consistency, and give you confidence that you're doing the right thing as an employer.

This guide explains what an HR Health Check is, who it's for, what's included, and how to book one in Lincolnshire with Tick HR Solutions.

### **What is an HR Health Check?**

An HR Health Check is a structured review of your HR foundations.

Think of it like an MOT for HR:

- ✓ Are your essentials in place?
- ✓ Do your documents reflect how you actually work?
- ✓ Are your managers following a consistent process?
- ✓ Are there any gaps that could cause problems later?
- ✓ It's not about producing paperwork for the sake of it. It's about creating clear, workable HR basics that support your team and protect your business.

### **Who is an HR Health Check for?**

An HR Health Check is ideal for Lincolnshire startups and SMEs, especially if you're in one of these situations:

#### **1 You're a startup hiring or about to hire your first employee**

The first hire is a major milestone and it's also where many HR questions begin:

- ✓ What must be in the contract?
- ✓ Do we need policies yet?
- ✓ How should we run probation?
- ✓ What happens if performance isn't right?

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A Health Check helps you set up a sensible foundation, so you can grow with confidence.

## **2 You've grown quickly and HR hasn't caught up**

Growth can highlight gaps:

- ✓ policies that are out of date,
- ✓ managers handling the same issue differently,
- ✓ unclear holiday/absence expectations,
- ✓ inconsistent probation decisions.

A Health Check helps you tighten the essentials without losing the culture you've built.

## **3 You want to prevent problems rather than react to them**

Many HR issues become expensive and stressful because they're dealt with too late, or inconsistently.

A Health Check helps you get proactive, clear expectations, clearer processes, and fewer "grey areas".

## **What does an HR Health Check include?**

A good HR Health Check looks at what you have in place and how it's used day to day. It should also be tailored to your business size and how you operate.

Here's what we typically review.

Employment contracts and key terms

We look at whether your contracts:

- ✓ cover the essentials clearly pay, hours, place of work, notice, probation, etc,
- ✓ are consistent across roles where they should be,
- ✓ match the reality of how your business works.

**Why it matters:** When contracts are vague or don't match day-to-day practice, misunderstandings are far more likely, particularly around notice, hours, probation, and expectations.

## **Your employee handbook and core HR policies**

You don't need a 60-page handbook to run a good business. You do need a few clear, usable policies that help you stay consistent and fair.

We'll look at whether you have and can follow the basics, such as:

- ✓ sickness absence reporting and return-to-work steps
- ✓ holiday booking and carry-over basics
- ✓ disciplinary and grievance basics
- ✓ performance and capability approach

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- ✓ family-friendly leave basics where relevant
- ✓ confidentiality and social media expectations where appropriate

**Why it matters:** Policies are often what you rely on when there's a tricky situation. If they're missing, unclear, or outdated, you're forced to make it up as you go, often under pressure.

### Right to work and essential compliance checks process review

We'll review your process for key checks and record-keeping in a practical, business-friendly way, including:

- ✓ what happens at offer stage and day one,
- ✓ what documents you keep and where,
- ✓ whether the process is consistent.

**Why it matters:** A simple process gap can become a major headache later.

### Onboarding and probation

We'll look at:

- ✓ whether onboarding is consistent,
- ✓ whether managers know what "good performance" looks like,
- ✓ whether probation reviews happen on time and are documented appropriately.

**Why it matters:** A good onboarding and probation process reduces mis-hires, improves retention, and makes performance management far easier.

### Absence management basics what you do in practice

Absence is one of the most common pressure points for SMEs.

We'll review whether you have:

- ✓ a clear reporting process,
- ✓ a consistent approach to return-to-work conversations,
- ✓ an escalation point for patterns and persistent issues.

**Why it matters:** Inconsistent handling of absence is a fast track to frustration, unfairness concerns, and culture problems.

### A clear action plan, what to fix first

This is the part that makes the Health Check valuable.

You should leave with:

- ✓ what's working well,

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- ✓ what's missing or unclear,
- ✓ the highest-risk gaps to address first,
- ✓ quick wins you can implement immediately,
- ✓ a sensible next-step plan based on your team size and goals.

### **Common HR gaps we see in Lincolnshire startups and SMEs**

Every business is different, but these come up regularly:

#### **“We used a contract template years ago”**

Templates can be a starting point, but they often don't reflect your business as it is today, especially if your working patterns, roles, or expectations have changed.

#### **“Our handbook exists... but no one uses it”**

If policies are too generic, too long, or don't match how you manage people, they won't be used, so they won't protect you when you need them.

#### **“Managers aren't consistent”**

One manager is firm, another is informal, another avoids the issue. The result is confusion and perceived unfairness often leading to grievances or resignations.

#### **“Probation is treated as a formality”**

Probation is a real opportunity to set expectations, coach early, and make confident decisions. When it's vague, performance issues can drift for months.

### **What you'll need to share and what you won't**

An HR Health Check doesn't have to be heavy or disruptive.

To keep it simple, we'll usually ask for:

- ✓ your contract template s if you have them,
- ✓ any handbook/policies even if you know they're out of date,
- ✓ a quick overview of your team size and structure,
- ✓ the top 2–3 HR questions you want to get clarity on.

If you don't have certain documents yet, that's fine. Knowing what's missing is part of the process and we can help you build the essentials in a sensible order.

### **Benefits of an HR Health Check beyond “compliance”**

Most businesses book an HR Health Check because they want to reduce risk. But the benefits often go further:

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- ✓ More confidence making people decisions
- ✓ More consistency across managers and teams
- ✓ Fewer misunderstandings around absence, holiday, and expectations
- ✓ A smoother onboarding experience for new hires
- ✓ Better retention because expectations and processes feel fair

**In short:** it helps you run a better workplace, not just a safer one.

HR Health Check in Lincolnshire: get in touch for a cost

If you're a #Lincolnshirestartup or #SME and you'd like to book an HR Health Check, the next step is simple:

Get in touch via our [Contact page](#) for a cost and to book a call.

Tell us your team size and what you'd like the Health Check to focus on for example: contracts, handbook/policies, onboarding/probation, or absence management .

We'll come back to you with:

- ✓ a clear idea of what's included,
- ✓ what we'll need from you,
- ✓ timescales, and
- ✓ the cost.

Ready to get started?

Head to our [Contact page](#) or call 01522 448 181 and request an HR Health Check.

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