



EMPLOYMENT STATUS FORUM

Terms of Reference

Independent expert forum on employment status law, tax and policy

Founder and inaugural Chair Rebecca Seeley Harris

1. Name

The organisation shall be known as the Employment Status Forum (ESF).

2. Founder

The Employment Status Forum was established by Rebecca Seeley Harris in 2026 in response to the need for an independent forum dedicated to the law, policy and practice of employment status and the wider labour supply chain.

The Forum brings together recognised experts from a range of disciplines to encourage informed debate and contribute to the development of coherent and workable employment status policy.

3. Vision

The Forum's vision is to provide a leading multidisciplinary independent forum on employment status, bringing together expertise from employment law, tax, business, academia, worker representation and public policy to improve the coherence, fairness and practical operation of employment status across all areas of regulation.

4. Purpose

The Forum is an independent, voluntary body whose purpose is to:

- promote informed discussion on employment status and related policy;
- provide a forum for the exchange of technical knowledge, research and practical experience;
- consider legislative, policy and administrative reform affecting employment status;
- engage constructively with Government, Parliament, HMRC, the Fair Work Agency, professional bodies and other stakeholders;
- improve understanding of employment status across tax, employment rights and the wider labour market; and
- identify emerging issues affecting workers, businesses, advisers and labour supply chains.

5. Principles

The Forum will operate in accordance with the following principles:

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- independence;
 - evidence-based discussion;
 - respect for differing professional opinions;
 - professional integrity and mutual respect;
 - constructive engagement; and
 - transparency about authorship, endorsement and areas of disagreement.

Membership of the Forum does not imply support for the views, publications or proposals of any individual member. Discussion of a paper or proposal does not constitute endorsement by the Forum unless that endorsement has been expressly agreed.

6. Membership

Membership is by invitation of the Chair, following consultation with members where appropriate.

The Forum will seek to include individuals with recognised expertise or substantial experience in employment status and related disciplines, including employment law, tax, labour supply, payroll, the National Minimum Wage, employment rights, industrial relations, academia, business and public policy.

Members will participate in their personal or professional capacity unless they are expressly representing an organisation. Participation is intended to be practical and proportionate. Members will not be expected to comment on every issue or support every proposal.

Members may resign at any time. Membership may be withdrawn where continued membership would be inconsistent with the purpose or principles of the Forum, following consultation with the member concerned and agreement by a majority of the Forum's current members.

7. Founder and Chair

Rebecca Seeley Harris is the Founder and inaugural Chair of the Employment Status Forum.

The Chair is responsible for:

- convening meetings;
- setting agendas following consultation with members;
- facilitating balanced and effective discussion;
- coordinating the Forum's programme of work;
- representing the Forum externally where appropriate, while distinguishing clearly between agreed Forum positions, summaries of Forum discussion and the Chair's own views; and
- ensuring that differing views are properly reflected in the Forum's work and communications.

The Chair does not determine the views of the Forum. Members remain free to express their own professional opinions, including opinions that differ from those of the Chair or other members.

The Founder will serve as Chair until she steps down or alternative arrangements are agreed by a majority of the Forum's members. The appointment and role of the Chair may be reviewed by the Forum as its work and governance develop.

8. Secretariat

The Forum will be supported by a Secretariat responsible for administrative arrangements, communications, meeting coordination and maintaining the Forum's records.

The Secretariat will support the work of the Chair and members but will not determine the Forum's policy positions.

9. Meetings

The Forum will meet as required. Meetings may include:

- discussion and stress-testing of policy papers;
- consideration of legislation, case law and enforcement practice;
- development of consultation responses;
- presentations by members or invited speakers;
- discussion with Government and other external stakeholders; and
- consideration of emerging employment status issues.

10. Decision-making and consensus

The Forum is primarily a consultative body. It is not intended or required that members should reach consensus on every issue.

Where a collective position is proposed, all members will be given a reasonable opportunity to participate or comment. A position may be described as a position of the Forum where it has been expressly agreed by a majority of the Forum's current members. The basis and level of agreement will be made clear. Where views differ, those differences may be recorded and presented. No member will be treated as supporting a collective position unless they have expressly agreed to it.

11. Working groups

The Forum may establish working groups to consider specific issues, undertake research or prepare papers. Working groups will report back to the Forum and will operate within any remit agreed by the Forum.

12. Publications and external communications

The Forum may publish or present:

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- papers prepared by individual members;
 - summaries of differing expert opinions;
 - consultation responses;
 - jointly agreed statements;
 - research and technical analysis; and
 - policy recommendations.

Each publication or communication will identify clearly whether it represents the work of an individual author, the opinion of a working group, a summary of differing views or a position agreed by the Forum.

No member's name, comments or views will be attributed publicly without that member's agreement.

Material published in the name of the Forum must be approved by the Chair following appropriate consultation with members. The Chair must ensure that any collective position attributed to the Forum satisfies the requirements in section 10.

13. Confidentiality

Unless otherwise agreed, members should treat Forum meetings and discussions as confidential in order to support open and frank debate. Members should not disclose or use outside the Forum any non-public information, opinions or comments shared in a meeting without appropriate permission and should not attribute comments to individual participants without consent. Meetings are not held under the Chatham House Rule unless this is expressly agreed for a particular meeting or discussion.

Members remain free to express their own professional views publicly but should not attribute comments to another member without consent.

14. Conflicts of interest

Members should disclose any material professional, financial or organisational interest relevant to a matter under discussion. The Chair may determine, following consultation where appropriate, how any disclosed interest should be managed. Where the Chair has the relevant interest, another member nominated by the Forum will determine how it should be managed.

15. Review and amendment

These Terms of Reference may be reviewed and amended with the agreement of a majority of the Forum's members to reflect the development of its membership, governance, objectives and programme of work.