



Mastering Documentation: Contract & Policy Essentials for Small Businesses

Date: 3rd December 2025

Run Time: Approximately 45 minutes

This session will start shortly (11:00am)



The detail contained within this webinar is based on GB & Northern Ireland employment legislation.

Members in the jurisdictions of the Republic of Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man are asked to please contact the Advice Service to obtain the information relevant to your jurisdiction.



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Today We Will Cover

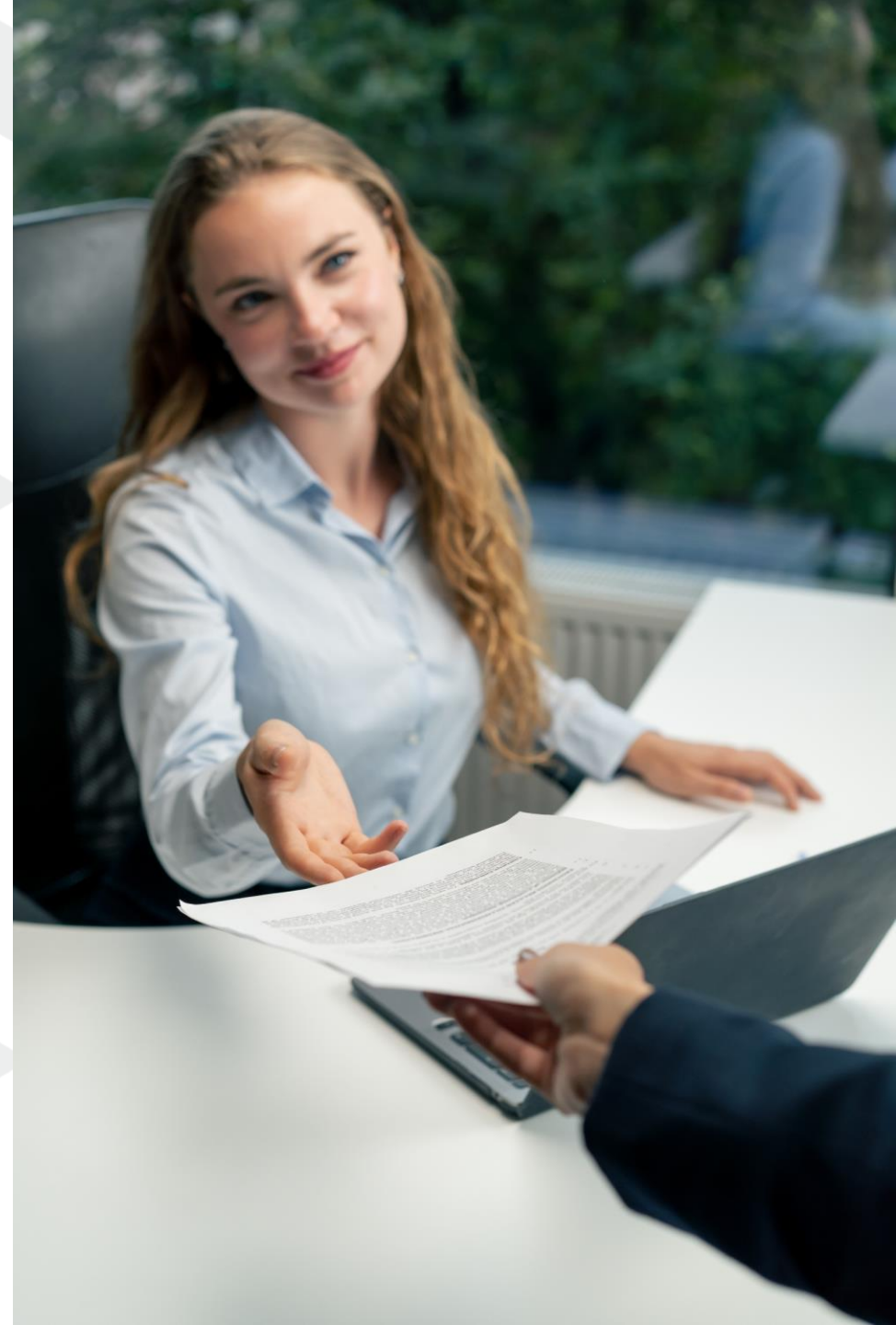
- Employment Contracts & Policies Explained
- Key Contract Components & Essential Policies
- Tips for Updating Contracts & Policies
- How the Employment Rights Bill Will Impact Contracts & Policies

Understanding Employment Contracts

- An employment contract lays out exactly what you expect from your employees.
- They also state the obligations you must stick to as their employer.
- Ensures both employers and employees are kept fully up to date about what is expected from both sides.
- Providing certain contractual terms is a legal requirement under section 1 Employment Rights Act 1996.

What Documents Form a Contract?

- SMT/Written Statement
- Employee Handbook & Company Policies
- Collective Agreements





Types of Employment Contracts

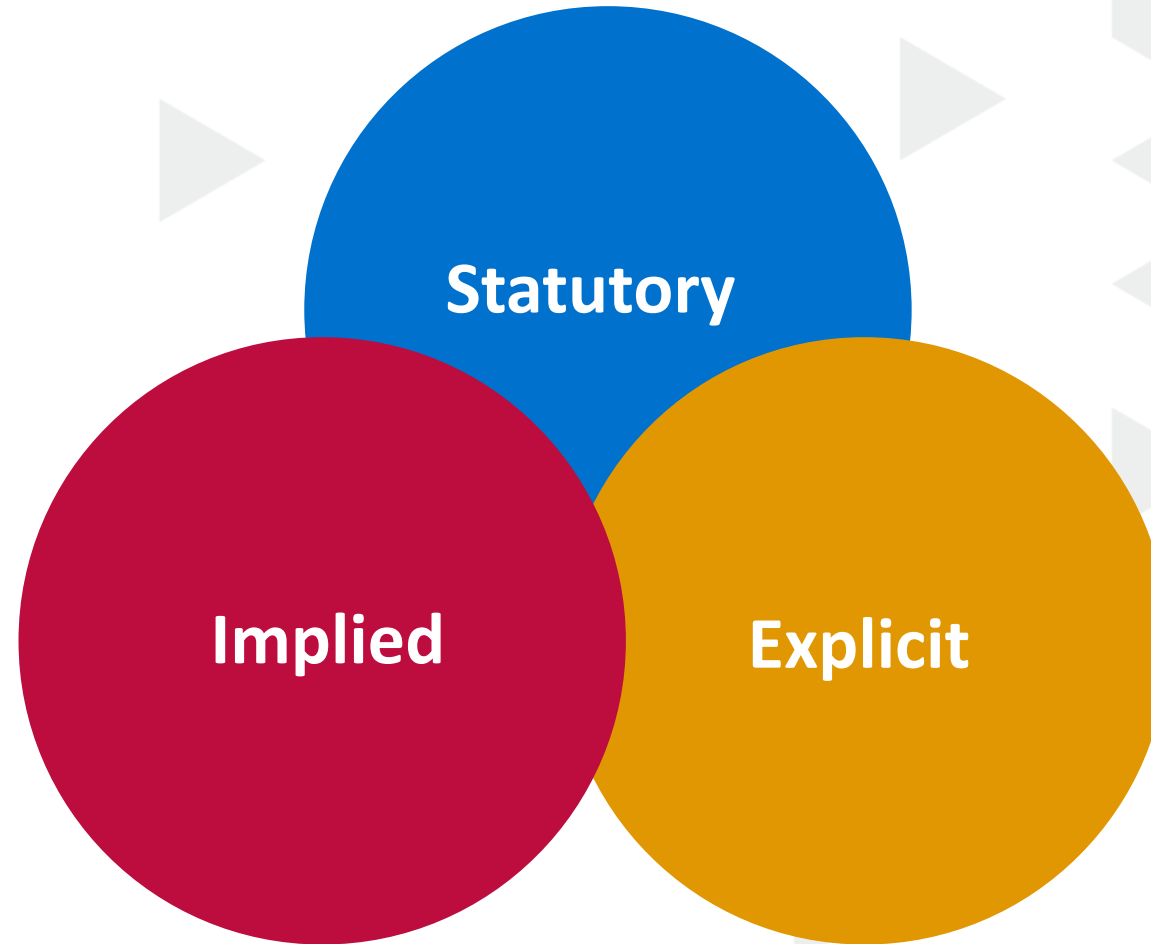
- Full-time contracts
- Part-time contracts
- Fixed-term contracts
- Temporary contracts
- Agency contracts
- Zero-hour contracts

Statement of Main Terms/ Written Statement

- Basic job information (start date, job description, location)
- Pay
- Holiday/Annual Leave
- Employment type
- Employment period
- Termination
- Collective Agreements

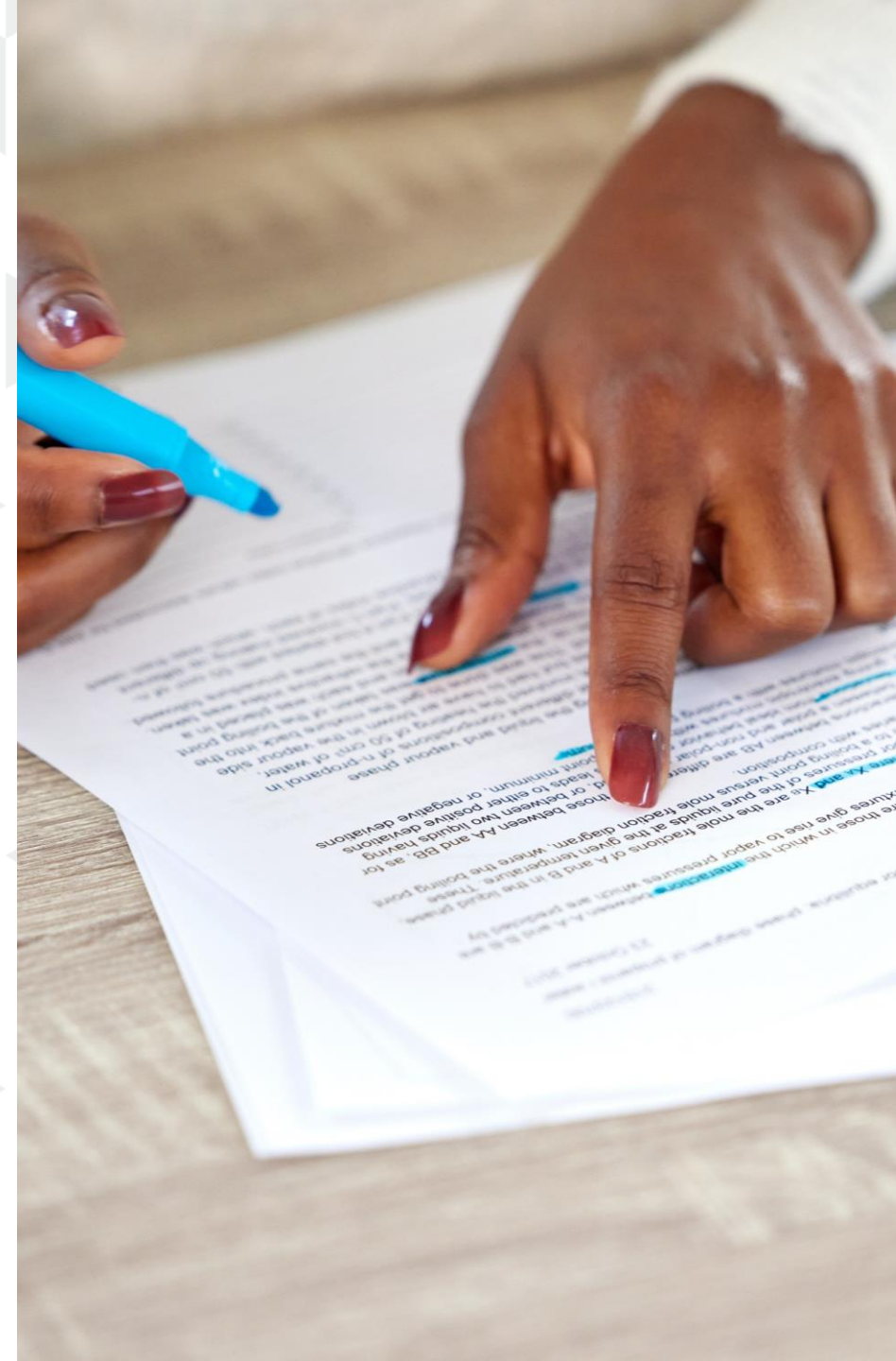
Tip: Keep this section brief – no longer than 3 pages.

What's Included?



Common Contract Terms

- Are the following included in your contracts?:
 - Details of probationary periods (if you have one in place, you **MUST** state this)
 - New Types of Leave: Neonatal, Carers, Parental Bereavement
 - Training entitlements
 - Details on variable working hours
 - Information on company benefits





Mistakes To Avoid

- Using outdated or generic templates
- Missing or unclear information
- Failing to include statutory minimum (wage, holiday)
- Making policies contractual

Top Tips for Contracts

- Keep contracts under review
- Provide written statement by commencement of employment
- Keep SMT concise
- Have an employee handbook
- Explore how to protect yourself with wording
- Look out for new laws affecting your contracts

Our documentation team can support you with any contract queries.

Understanding Policies

- A set of guidelines or rules for employee behaviour and decision-making
- Policies are typically non-contractual and used to enforce standards, whereas contract terms are legally enforceable and can result in legal action if breached.
- Covers a broader range of workplace conduct and operational procedures that are not typically included in the main contract
- Typically included as part of your employee handbook

Essential Policies – Legally Required

- H&S Policy
- Disciplinary/Dismissal Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy





Essential Policies – Highly Recommended

- Equal Opportunities
- Flexible Working
- Sickness & Absence
- Internet Usage/Social Media
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-Harassment & Bullying
- Restrictive Covenant

A close-up photograph of a light blue document titled "EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK" in large, dark, serif capital letters. A black pen is positioned diagonally in the upper right corner, and the bottom edge of a pair of glasses is visible in the upper left corner.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Employee Handbook

- Ideal to keep your rules and policies together
- Include your company values
- Make it accessible to employees
- Keep under continual review
- If it's not written down, it's extremely difficult to evidence!

Updating Contracts & Handbooks – Variation of Contract

- Should be updated when any terms or conditions contained within are changed.
- Not all changes are negative, some will be well received. These include pay rises or the addition of flexible working
- Can also be updated by mutual or collective agreement
- Unilateral changes (one-sided decisions) to terms and conditions should be avoided
- May lead to claims for breach of contract, constructive dismissal or discrimination claims.

Updating Contracts & Handbooks – Best Practice

- Consult with the affected employees, explaining the reasons for the proposed
- Consider any objections or concerns raised by employees.
- You can't lawfully change terms without agreement from the employee
- Receiving expressed agreement from the employee is the safest way to vary an agreement





Updating Contracts & Handbooks – Best Practice

- Issue a notice to all employees that the terms of their contracts will change from a specific date.
- Employer may request that individual employees agree to new terms and conditions
- Determine whether the changes involve contractual rights or merely work practises.
- Consider including a variation clause

Changes to Fire/Rehire (Dismissal & Re-engagement)

- As part of the employment rights bill, the government has pledged to end 'fire and rehire' practices.
- The current roadmap expects changes to come into play October 2026
- Consultation is ongoing
- If passed, it would make it so that any dismissals under fire/rehire would be classed as unfair
- Gov published an updated code of practice in July 2024, this will be reviewed inline with the proposed changes for 2026

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Any Questions?

Let's Talk

events@croner.co.uk

