

NSL avoid illegal working with online ID checking system

Fraud is always a risk to an organisation no matter its size or industry type. Identity fraud continues to be a major risk for UK companies. Its scope increases each year and the annual losses sustained by its victims run into billions of pounds. Identity fraud is increasingly common in the UK. It is spread across all sectors but predominately within the service industry sector. The parking and parking enforcement sector in the UK, as part of the service industry sector, is also at risk from identity fraud.



To tackle identity fraud and illegal working, The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 was brought in by the United Kingdom Government in February 2008. Under this law, employers are responsible for preventing illegal working, while the authorities are responsible for monitoring compliance. Any employer that fails to comply could face a hefty fine and reputational damage. Faced with these prospects, companies are understandably keen to avoid employing illegal workers. While many companies are eager to comply with current legislation, thereby avoiding illegal employment and related fines, few have found an appropriate solution yet.

Fraud preventative measures to protect you organisation from identity fraud

NSL, the largest employer of Civil Enforcement Officers, Parking Attendants and Traffic Attendants in the United Kingdom, has taken a number of fraud preventative measures to protect the organisation from identity fraud, illegal working and reputational damage. NSL employs over 5,000 staff undertaking highly regulated services on behalf of Government Departments and Local Authorities. It is extremely important that the staff NSL employs have been fully vetted as integrity is an important facet of the service NSL delivers. Kenneth Hanslip, Head of Professional Standards at NSL: "We recognise the risk of reputational damage to our clients and ourselves should we fail to ensure that staff have been properly vetted". Kenneth continues:

"Besides, we want to know who we are working with. Apart from reputational damage identity fraud can devastate your business and the morale of your staff".



In 2004, NSL implemented new company processes and audit procedures which run alongside a comprehensive programme of pre-arranged and unannounced visits by Professional Standards Unit staff. These company processes ensure consistent managerial adherence to fraud prevention policies. An important part of the process is to establish the identity of a potential employee before he or she is recruited.



The inspection and verification of identity documents are embedded in the employee screening process. This

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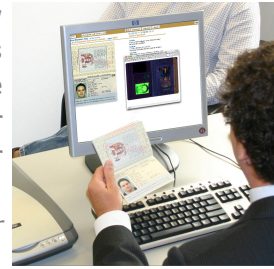
enables NSL to meet its legal obligation to verify an applicant's identity before offering a contract, and avoids fines for employing illegal workers. Kenneth Hanslip: "We have conducted varying levels of identity checks for many years. But again and again the question arose: How can we prove the validity of an ID document with our regular checking methods?" NSL started looking for a

tool or service that could help them to conduct reliable identity checks. They found Keesing and started working with a more technologically advanced system: Keesing ID DocumentScan (KIDDS). ID DocumentScan is an online solution for the checking and administration of identity documents. Manju Bhojwani, Professional Standards Co-ordinator and frequent user of KIDDS: *"This system allows us to carry out more detailed checks on identity documents presented to us. Since we have been using ID DocumentScan we have been more confident about the identity checks we conduct. The system tells you within 60 seconds whether or not a document is genuine. Furthermore, a check on the Right to Work is incorporated in the system as well and tells you directly if someone is allowed to work in the United Kingdom"*. With processing time reduced considerably, and staff using ID DocumentScan increasing in confidence Kenneth and Manju recognise that the security of the organisation and its systems have been enhanced.

"The person who turns up at the job interview might not be the person who turns up at the first working day"



Before a new employee starts working for NSL, the recruiting manager has to see his or her passport. Kenneth: *"We don't expect our managers to be*



experts when it comes to the checking of identity documents, but they are all trained and aware of how they can recognise forgeries". A copy of the document is made and directly sent to the Professional Standards Unit who check the identity document with ID DocumentScan. If the identity document is okay a personnel file will be created. The checks are scrutinised prior to the issue of an identity badge. ID DocumentScan is used as a central resource to ensure that high quality images are stored and verified by central support staff. Besides checking the identity document itself, the potential employee needs to be verified too. Therefore, the managers have also completed training on profiling. Kenneth Hanslip: *"The person who turns up at the job interview might not be the person who turns up at the first working day"*.

NSL conduct 70 to 80 checks per week. Furthermore, they have started up a catch up process with the copies of identity documents in personnel files from workers recruited before NSL started working with Keesing's system. Manju Bhojwani: *"It's good practice to undertake this process and we did find some historic issues that required further consideration"*.

A solution that supports us when checking identity documents

NSL also liaise with the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) to ensure that internal knowledge and skills are maintained to the highest level. Manju: *"We can always contact the UKBA when we are in doubt with regard to the validity of a passport or if we need any further information. But when it comes to*

international identity documents the UKBA cannot always help us out. We have encountered many false Portuguese, German and Italian identity documents. The variety in documents presented to us was another reason to look for a solution that could support us when checking identity documents. ID DocumentScan not only checks the document but also offers a reference database with images and descriptions of more than 2,000 identity documents from over 190 countries. The identity documents presented to us can be compared to the reference material in Keesing's database. If, with the help of ID DocumentScan, we come across a false passport we immediately inform the UKBA to undertake further action".



"Preventing illegal working is one of our USP's"

It costs NSL around GBP 3,000 to employ a new officer; this includes tests, assessments, the uniform and training on the job. So the financial loss alone to NSL, if they employ someone illegally, is considerable. According to Kenneth Hanslip it is extremely important that NSL conducts identity checks: *"Our clients and the public expect us to ensure that all staff are fully vetted prior to deployment on their behalf. Apart from the financial implications identity fraud can have widespread reputational repercussions. Both our clients and ourselves would suffer as a result of concerns with staff identity or right to work being raised".* Identity fraud can undermine your reputation as media attention can create a loss of public confidence in the services both the company and its clients provide. *"ID DocumentScan gives certainty that we won't be embarrassed. Furthermore, the fact that we check our employees, comply with the law and prevent illegal working is one of our USP's".* Within our industry it is well known that NSL is extremely proactive in preventing

and detecting identity fraud. NSL regularly publicises its identity fraud prevention capabilities both to their prospective and existing clients and to their prospective and existing employees. *"We believe that by doing so, we will enhance our reputation and discourage applications for employment from individuals who do not have legitimate identification or a right to take up work in the United Kingdom".*

Any organisation can conduct reliable checks

Kenneth believes that organisations should conduct identity checks: *"Right to work checks are compulsory. However, a standardised level of identity checking for all employees, irrespective of their status or background, would inevitably reduce illegal working either directly or indirectly".* Identity checks can also act as a deterrent – people will think twice before applying to a company that verifies applicant identities as a matter of policy. The development and implementation of internal recruitment procedures reduces recruitment-related risk and avoids illegal working. It also allows you to comply with prevailing legal requirements. The right combination of tools, software and reference materials should enable any organisation to conduct reliable checks. According to Kenneth, the security of NSL and its systems have been validated through robust identity checking procedures as well. *"ID DocumentScan is a very user-friendly document checking and storage system that works".* To the question would you recommend ID DocumentScan to other operations? Kenneth answers: *"Very much so".*



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