



Government Procurement Service

Software Service Definition Document

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The Hire Lab

The Hire Lab provides a mature, cloud-based recruitment platform designed to meet defined public sector recruitment and operational requirements. The service is built on proven technology that is already deployed across multiple public and commercial sector organisations in the UK and Ireland.

The platform is designed to support both organisational recruitment needs and the candidate experience. Traditional recruitment systems often prioritise internal administrative processes, which can result in limited visibility and engagement for candidates. The Hire Lab addresses this by providing a structured candidate portal, clear communication, and transparent workflow progression throughout the recruitment lifecycle.

The service enables hiring teams to configure and automate recruitment processes while maintaining consistency, governance, and compliance. Recruitment activity, communications, and candidate interactions are managed through a single platform, supporting efficient operation and improved oversight.

The Hire Lab is used by public sector organisations to manage recruitment activity at scale while supporting positive candidate engagement and organisational brand consistency. The service is delivered in partnership with customers, with configuration and support aligned to evolving organisational requirements over time.

Approach

The Hire Lab solution is built on proven technology that is already deployed across a range of public and commercial sector organisations. The service is delivered in partnership with customers to ensure that configuration, deployment, and ongoing operation align with defined organisational requirements. The implementation approach focuses on simplifying recruitment workflows, reducing administrative complexity, and improving operational efficiency across the recruitment lifecycle.

The Hire Lab operates an established product roadmap and client engagement process, including the Pathfinder Programme, which enables customers to provide structured input into product direction and future enhancements. This approach supports continuous improvement while maintaining platform stability and governance. The organisation operates using agile delivery practices, enabling timely response to configuration changes, regulatory requirements, and evolving user needs.

In addition to core platform delivery, The Hire Lab provides optional consultancy services to support organisations in areas such as candidate experience design, employer branding alignment, and recruitment process optimisation. These services are intended to help organisations deliver consistent, transparent, and inclusive recruitment experiences.

Where additional functionality is required beyond standard configuration, bespoke development can be delivered by agreement. Any such work is scoped collaboratively, with agreed outcomes, effort estimates, delivery schedules, and costs. Bespoke consultancy or development services are delivered on a time and materials basis in line with published daily rates and are managed through the assigned Project Manager.

The Hire Lab Recruitment System

The Hire Lab Recruitment System is a unified, cloud-based recruitment platform designed to support public sector hiring teams throughout the full recruitment lifecycle. The system enables organisations to manage recruitment activity through a single service, from vacancy creation and approval through application management, shortlisting, interviews, offers, and onboarding.

The service provides branded candidate portals that support structured communication and engagement throughout the recruitment process. Candidates can submit applications, receive updates, complete required tasks, and manage their progression through a secure, self-service portal. This approach supports transparency and consistency while enabling organisations to present a clear and professional employer brand.

The platform includes full vacancy and requisition management, supporting job creation, approval workflows, advertising, and posting. Applications are managed through configurable workflows with role-based access controls, structured shortlisting, scoring, and full audit trails. Automation and workflow configuration are

used to reduce manual administration and support efficient, repeatable recruitment processes.

Task management is supported across all user roles, including candidates, recruiters, and hiring managers. Tasks and notifications can be automated to support timely completion of recruitment activities and consistent communication throughout the process.

The service provides real-time dashboards and reporting to support operational oversight, compliance monitoring, and recruitment performance analysis. Reports can be exported in standard formats for further analysis and governance purposes.

The Hire Lab Recruitment System supports integration with external platforms and systems commonly used in the public sector. This includes integration with NHS Jobs for vacancy publishing, Electronic Staff Record (ESR) for downstream workforce processes, and other third-party systems such as eDBS and EURES where required. Integration with HR, payroll, or related systems is supported via secure APIs, subject to agreed scope and configuration.

An integrated onboarding module supports the transition from recruitment to employment. The onboarding workflow enables organisations to present onboarding tasks, documentation, and guidance to candidates following offer acceptance, supporting compliance and structured onboarding through to the start date.

Optional recruitment tools, such as assessments, skills or language testing, and video interviewing, can be provided where required and are subject to separate agreement and pricing.

The system is designed to reduce administrative effort, improve process visibility, and support consistent recruitment practices. By consolidating recruitment activity within a single platform, organisations can monitor recruitment progress in real time, support regulatory and diversity reporting requirements, and deliver inclusive recruitment processes aligned with accessibility standards.

The Hire Lab Onboarding System

The Hire Lab Onboarding System supports a structured and efficient transition from recruitment to employment. The module provides a configurable onboarding workflow with task checklists and guided, step-by-step instructions that enable new hires to review information, complete required actions, and submit documentation through their candidate portal.

HR teams can securely store onboarding documentation, forms, and supporting materials within the platform and make these available to candidates once an offer has been accepted. Upon acceptance, candidates are directed to an Onboarding section within their portal, where they can view offer letters and contracts, understand required onboarding tasks, and track completion status.

The onboarding workflow is configurable by the client and can be tailored by role, employment type, or organisation. Content may include welcome information, instructional materials, and links to supporting resources, allowing organisations to deliver a consistent and structured onboarding experience aligned to their internal processes.

Service overview

A secure, cloud-based Applicant Tracking System designed for public sector recruitment. The service supports end-to-end hiring, from job creation and advertising through application management, shortlisting, interviews, offers and onboarding, with configurable workflows, role-based access controls, and full GDPR compliance. The service supports integration with external recruitment platforms, including NHS Jobs, and downstream systems such as Electronic Staff Record (ESR), where required.

Service category

Human capital management – Talent Management Applications.

Deployment model

The service is delivered using a public cloud deployment model.

Data location

All service data is stored and processed within the United Kingdom.

Multi-cloud support

The service is delivered as a single-cloud, managed SaaS solution and does not support multi-cloud deployment.

Service features

- End-to-end recruitment workflow from job creation to onboarding
- Configurable application forms with conditional logic and document uploads
- Role-based access controls for recruiters, panel members, and administrators
- Secure candidate portal accessible on desktop and mobile browsers
- Structured shortlisting and scoring with configurable feedback forms
- Interview scheduling with calendar integration and automated notifications
- Offer management with configurable templates and approval workflows

- GDPR-compliant data handling with retention controls and audit logging
- Real-time operational reporting with export to Excel and CSV
- Integration support for external platforms including NHS Jobs and ESR

Service benefits

- Manage recruitment processes efficiently through a single secure platform
- Reduce administrative effort with configurable workflows and automation
- Improve hiring governance using role-based access and audit trails
- Enable faster shortlisting through structured scoring and evaluation tools
- Support consistent decision-making with standardised recruitment processes
- Provide candidates with clear, accessible application and status updates
- Minimise compliance risk through built-in GDPR and retention controls
- Support NHS recruitment workflows through integration with NHS Jobs and ESR
- Increase transparency with real-time reporting and data exports
- Support remote recruitment teams with browser-based access anywhere

Service constraints

The service is accessed via modern web browsers and requires an active internet connection. Planned maintenance is carried out outside standard business hours where possible and notified in advance. Support is provided during published support hours. The service is delivered as a standardised SaaS platform and customer-specific hosting models or on-premise deployments are not supported.

System requirements

- Modern web browser supporting HTML5 and JavaScript
- Reliable internet connection
- JavaScript enabled
- Cookies enabled for session management and security
- PDF reader for generated documents and reports
- Email access for system notifications
- Screen resolution suitable for desktop or tablet use
- Secure user authentication credentials

- Up-to-date operating system
- Assistive technologies supported, including screen readers

Supported browsers

The service supports Microsoft Edge, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari.

Mobile access

The service is designed for use on mobile devices through a responsive, browser-based interface. Core functionality is available on mobile devices, while some administrative configuration and reporting features are optimised for desktop use due to screen size and data complexity.

Support model and service management

Support is provided through email, online ticketing, and phone support during standard business hours (9 to 5 UK time, Monday to Friday). Web chat support is not provided. Onsite support can be provided by prior agreement and is charged separately.

Support queries are acknowledged within one business hour during support hours. Queries raised outside these hours are logged and responded to on the next business day.

Users can view and track support tickets and add updates. Ticket prioritisation is managed in line with agreed service levels.

Support is delivered through a tiered model:

- Level 1 support for incident resolution, configuration guidance, and defect management
- Level 2 support from application specialists for deeper functional or configuration investigation
- Level 3 support from senior engineers for complex technical or infrastructure-related issues

A named Account Manager is provided for service oversight and governance. Technical specialists are available for escalation when required. Third parties engaged by the buyer may access support features where explicitly authorised.

Service interface

The service is accessed through a secure, browser-based web interface. Role-specific dashboards are provided for recruiters, administrators, and panel members. Navigation is menu-driven with consistent layouts, contextual actions, and embedded guidance. The

interface supports responsive design and includes accessibility features such as keyboard navigation, screen reader support, and adjustable text sizing.

Accessibility and assistive technology testing

The service is designed to meet WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility requirements and align with EN 301 549. Automated accessibility testing is used to identify issues such as colour contrast, heading structure, and form labelling. Manual testing has been carried out using screen readers including NVDA and VoiceOver to validate keyboard navigation, focus order, form interaction, and error handling. Identified issues are logged, prioritised, and addressed through the quality assurance and release process.

Documentation and training

Users are supported through guided onboarding and online training sessions for administrators and key users. Documentation is provided through Learn Now video tutorials and in-application contextual guidance such as info buttons and prompts. Learn Now videos provide task-based walkthroughs for common activities and administrative functions and act as the primary form of user documentation. Onsite training can be provided by prior agreement and is charged separately.

API and integrations

The service provides a secure API to support integration with external systems. Authorised systems can create and update recruitment data and retrieve structured data for integration and reporting purposes. This includes integration with external recruitment platforms such as NHS Jobs and downstream systems including Electronic Staff Record (ESR), where required.

Core system setup, including workflows, forms, roles, and permissions, is managed through the administrative interface and is not performed via API. API usage is subject to authentication, access controls, rate limiting, and versioning. API documentation is provided in PDF format.

Metrics and reporting

The service provides operational and usage metrics including recruitment activity, workflow progression, user activity, reporting usage, and service performance indicators. For organisations using NHS Jobs and ESR integrations, reporting can support operational oversight of recruitment pipelines and data exchanges. Metrics are available through real-time dashboards, regular reports, and reports provided on request. Metrics are not currently exposed via API.

Data export, import, and exit

Authorised users can export report-generated data directly to Excel or CSV for operational and management purposes. For full contract exit or bulk data extraction, authorised supplier personnel perform structured exports on behalf of the buyer to ensure security and data integrity. Export scope and timing are agreed in advance and data is transferred securely. Data import is supported using CSV files.

At the end of the contract, the supplier supports data extraction in line with the agreed exit process. Following confirmation from the buyer, the service environment is securely decommissioned and data is permanently deleted in line with GDPR and agreed retention obligations. Standard exit support and data extraction are included in the contract price. Additional costs may apply for extended access, repeated extracts, bespoke data transformations, or onsite support.

Security overview

All data transmitted between the buyer's network and the service is protected using TLS 1.2 or higher. Data transmitted within the service network is also protected using encrypted connections. Data at rest is encrypted using industry-standard encryption. Physical security and environmental controls are managed by the cloud infrastructure provider in line with recognised assurance standards.

The service does not connect directly to public sector networks and is accessed securely over the public internet. Penetration testing is carried out at least annually by an independent external testing organisation.

The service guarantees 99.5% availability measured monthly, excluding planned maintenance and factors outside the supplier's reasonable control. Where availability falls below this level, service credits apply in accordance with the Service Level Agreement and are applied to future invoices. Planned maintenance is notified in advance and scheduled outside core business hours where possible.

Resilience and outage reporting

The service is hosted on resilient cloud infrastructure designed to operate across multiple availability zones within the UK. Components are monitored continuously and designed to tolerate failure. Data is backed up regularly and recovery procedures are tested.

There is no public status dashboard or outage reporting API. In the event of a service outage, email notifications are issued to nominated buyer contacts and updates are provided through the support ticketing system. Incident reports and root cause analysis can be provided on request.

Security governance and operations

Security governance is managed through defined internal policies and procedures aligned with government cloud security principles. Configuration and change management are controlled through supplier-defined processes including version control, testing, approval, and rollback.

Vulnerability management includes scanning, external penetration testing, prioritised remediation, and monitoring of trusted threat intelligence sources. Protective monitoring includes logging, alerting, and investigation of anomalous activity.

Incident management processes are defined for common events, with incidents reported via email, phone, or ticketing and incident reports provided on request.

Data sanitisation is performed using cryptographic erasure and logical data erasure. Physical equipment disposal is managed by the cloud infrastructure provider using third-party destruction services.

Staff screening is performed but does not conform to BS7858:2019. Where required, staff can be screened to BPSS level. Post-quantum cryptography is not currently implemented.

Optional Additional Solutions

The Hire Lab Recruitment and Onboarding System can be extended through a range of optional additional solutions that allow organisations to tailor the platform to their specific operational, technical and integration requirements. All optional solutions are delivered as enhancements to the core service and can be enabled or disabled as required.

Optional additional solutions include:

Online video interviewing

Asynchronous (one-way) video interviewing functionality that allows candidates to record responses to predefined interview questions. Video responses are securely stored and made available to authorised recruiters and panel members for review within the platform.

Psychometric and skills assessments

Integration with third-party assessment providers to support psychometric, aptitude, skills or role-specific testing as part of the recruitment workflow. Assessment configuration and result visibility are managed within The Hire Lab platform. Third-party assessment services are provided separately.

Language assessment tools

Integration with CEFR-aligned language assessment providers to support language testing and evaluation as part of recruitment processes.

SMS notifications

SMS messaging functionality to support candidate communications, reminders and notifications alongside standard email communications.

Additional branded career portals

Support for multiple branded candidate career portals, allowing organisations or sub-organisations to present distinct branding and candidate experiences while operating within a single system instance.

Additional programme application profiles

Support for multiple programme or campaign-specific application profiles beyond the standard configuration, enabling tailored application journeys for different recruitment initiatives.

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

Enhanced authentication controls through Multi-Factor Authentication to support strengthened access security for applicants.

Alternate email address support

Support for secondary or alternate candidate email addresses to improve communication flexibility and reduce the risk of missed communications.

Microsoft Teams integration

Integration with Microsoft Teams to support interview scheduling, notifications and recruiter collaboration within existing Microsoft environments.

Job board integration

Integration with external job boards to support vacancy posting, updates and application tracking from third-party advertising platforms. Job board services are provided by external providers.

Single Sign-On (SSO) integration

Single Sign-On integration using Microsoft Entra ID (Azure AD), allowing users to authenticate using their existing organisational credentials.

eVetting integration

Integration with eVetting services to support initiation, tracking and management of vetting checks as part of recruitment workflows.

Advanced reporting configuration

Configuration of additional reports, dashboards or data views beyond the standard reporting set to support specific organisational reporting or governance needs.

Bespoke workflow configuration

Design and configuration of non-standard recruitment or onboarding workflows to support unique organisational processes.

Bespoke integrations

Development of custom integrations with third-party systems using secure APIs, where standard integrations are not available.

These optional modules allow the Client to expand functionality in a modular way, ensuring the solution remains scalable and adaptable to future recruitment needs.

Next Steps

Organisations interested in the service can contact The Hire Lab to request further information or arrange a demonstration of the platform. Engagements are handled in line with G-Cloud procurement rules and are intended to support buyers in understanding service capabilities, configuration options, and suitability for their requirements.

Enquiries can be made by email at **hello@thehirelab.com** or via the company website at **www.thehirelab.com**.