



14 November 2023

Dear Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Just Eat,

Illegal Working in the Food Delivery Industry

This Government is determined to prevent illegal migration and clamp down on abuse of our immigration rules.

Illegal working is not a victimless crime. The ability to work illegally in the UK is a major driver of illegal migration and provides the practical means for migrants to remain in the UK unlawfully. It undercuts legitimate businesses and cheats those with the right to work in the UK out of employment. It is invariably linked to tax evasion, illegal renting and abusive and exploitative behaviour, including modern slavery in the most serious cases. Those who enable illegal working – either deliberately or through malpractice – are complicit in the harm it causes society.

Our Immigration Enforcement teams are surging the number of operations being conducted to bring those violating our laws to justice. Over the first three quarters of 2023, over 4,000 immigration enforcement raids have taken place across the UK targeting illegal working, marking a 70 per cent rise on raids completed during the same period in 2022. For those employers that are caught acting in a non-compliant manner, we are trebling the fines they will be issued.

This heightened enforcement activity has exposed the level of illegal working within the food delivery sector. Specific enforcement activity directed against the sector so far this year has resulted in 381 people being arrested.

Whilst we continue to ratchet up enforcement activity, I am determined to tackle the root cause of the problem. The gig economy is a growing part of the UK labour market that, when operating correctly, is a force for good. However, the current levels of abuse within the sector, enabled by business models which rely on individuals themselves to confirm a person's eligibility to work, enable unchecked account sharing to take place and are completely unacceptable. This has allowed illegal working, labour exploitation – with tragic results – and places the security of the public at risk. When a member of the public places an order with a food delivery company, they have the right to know that the person who turns up at their door has been properly vetted by the delivery company.

The practice of allowing account holders to substitute work to other individuals completely unknown to your business, potentially including illegal workers, must end. The Government expects you to end this unfair and dangerous practice and, as swiftly as possible, evidence to us the processes and technology implemented - such as facial recognition software - to enforce that position. As leading technology businesses, you are uniquely placed to respond to the challenge swiftly.

Over the last few months, the Home Office has had constructive engagement with the sector. In the summer we secured agreement to strengthen recruitment processes, including how to confirm a person's right to work in the UK, and to improve awareness of illegal working. But as I made clear to you earlier today, we must go further to end unchecked account sharing altogether.

I am pleased to have secured agreement with you today on improvements to your operations. By maximising the power of technology, you can prevent unchecked account sharing and ensure the public have confidence that the person delivering to their homes has been properly vetted. We have agreed to continue working together at pace, recognising the urgency and seriousness of this issue. However, if progress towards this outcome cannot be demonstrated, the Government will be forced to consider all options to prevent illegal working and exploitation in this sector. The stakes are simply too high to allow practices that allow it to continue unaddressed.

The Home Office's priority will always be to strengthen our borders and keep the British public safe. It is crucial that we work together to end those practices which compromise this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Jenrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Minister of State for Immigration