How to choose the right HR support for your business

ZEST
Expert HR Solutions

Choosing the right HR support is one of the most important decisions you can make for your business.

Get it right and you'll have happier people, fewer problems, stronger performance and more time to focus on growth. Get it wrong and you could face costly mistakes, legal risks and culture issues that affect your bottom line.

This guide is here to help you to make the right choice.

Whether you're hiring your first employee, growing your team or dealing with complex people challenges, it's vital to understand what kind of HR support you need and how to get it.

1. The different HR roles and how they support your business at every level

HR isn't just about policies and paperwork. It operates on three levels, each offering different values to your business.

Operational HR

This is the foundation. It's the day-to-day work that keeps you legally compliant and your business running smoothly.

Examples:

- Contracts, handbooks and policies
- Absence and holiday management
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Health and safety basics

Middle: Tactical HR

This level helps you to manage and improve your people practices.

Examples:

- Recruitment and onboarding
- Employee relations
- Performance management
- Training and development
- Supporting line managers

Top: Strategic HR

This is where HR becomes a growth driver. It links people strategy directly to business outcomes.

Examples:

- Organisational design and workforce planning
- Leadership development and succession planning
- Culture and engagement strategies
- Change management and transformation
- Employer brand and retention

As a business, you need to decide what HR support you need. Many businesses only focus on the bottom layer and miss out on the value HR can really bring.

That's why we advise getting HR support that can help you with all 3.

2. The different ways to get HR support (and what they cost)

Here are your main options:

Option 1: Train an existing team member

- ✅ Lowest upfront cost
- ❌ Lacks experience, may miss risks or make mistakes
- ❌ Not suitable for anything beyond basic admin
- 💷 Still requires investment in training

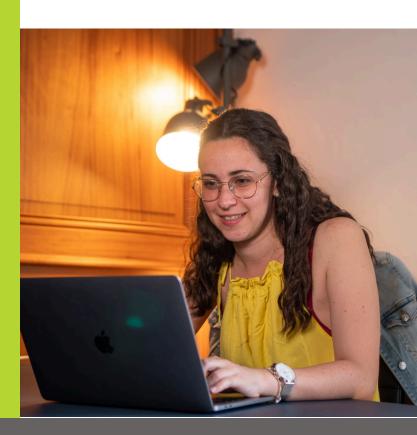**Option 2: Hire an internal HR manager**

- ✅ Dedicated support on-site
- ❌ High salary, recruitment costs and benefits
- ❌ May not be cost-effective for SMEs
- 💷 Average HR Manager salary: £45,000–£60,000+

Option 3: Use a large HR provider

- ✅ Fixed-fee packages, 24/7 support
- ❌ Call-centre style advice, little personalisation
- ❌ Not strategic or proactive and very risk adverse
- 💷 Packages from £200/month, but costs increase with complexity

Option 4: Work with an independent HR consultant

- ✅ Personalised support from someone who knows your business
- ✅ Flexible and cost-effective
- ✅ Strategic input and hands-on delivery

Why choose an independent HR consultant:

An independent HR consultant gives you the best of both worlds - expert support when you need it, without the overheads of hiring in-house or the impersonal service of a large provider.

Here's what sets us apart:

1. Personal service

You'll work with someone who gets to know your business, your team and your goals – not a stranger in a call centre.

2. Flexibility

Support that grows with you. Whether it's a quick call, a project or long-term partnership, you only pay for what you need.

3. Deep expertise

We bring years of hands-on HR experience across a range of industries. We know what works, what doesn't and how to get results quickly.

4. Strategic insight

We go beyond the basics to help you to build a high-performing team, reduce risk and improve your business from the inside out.

5. Value for money

You get access to senior-level HR support for a fraction of the cost of hiring in-house – with a focus on solving problems before they escalate.

What to do next

If you'd like to learn more
about how we can help,
please get in touch and
let's book in an initial free
confidential discovery
call today.

Get in touch

www.zesthr.co.uk

0798 393 6747

tara@zesthr.co.uk

ZEST
Expert HR Solutions