

Why didn't HMRC try to beat exploitation in the gig eco...

Published: January 12, 2026, 9:28 pm

I am delighted that it [has today been ruled](#) that Uber's drivers are employees of the company and not self employed contractors.

The decision is good for the employees in question. They will now enjoy the minimum wage, holiday and sick leave entitlements, maternity and paternity rights, and employment protection. I also hope they will be fairly reimbursed for their costs of providing a car.

The decision is also vital for the development of the economy: we cannot build it on the basis of exploitation which looked to be likely.

There is, however one very important question to ask. That is is why it took two employees to bring the case when I believe it was HMRC's job to do so? HMRC are entrusted with enforcing tax law and they are entrusted with enforcing the minimum wage and that it took two employees to bring this case suggests they have neglected their duties. They did not try to impose the correct employment structure on these contracts (which have always looked to be employments to me) and as a result failed these (and hundreds of thousands of others) employees get payments to which they were entitled.

Could it be HMRC contrived on government instruction in failing to enforce the law in this area to make it look as though employment was rising whatever the social, legal and economic cost? I think it possible. If so heads should roll.

It's a question for the Treasury or Public Accounts Committee I think.