breathe

Breathe *easy* with simple HR software

A guide for SMEs

Leave to approve

Milo Garcia
Holiday from 20/07/2024

Kelani Manuel
Holiday from 12/09/2024

Upload company document:
Company Handbook 2024

upload   cancel
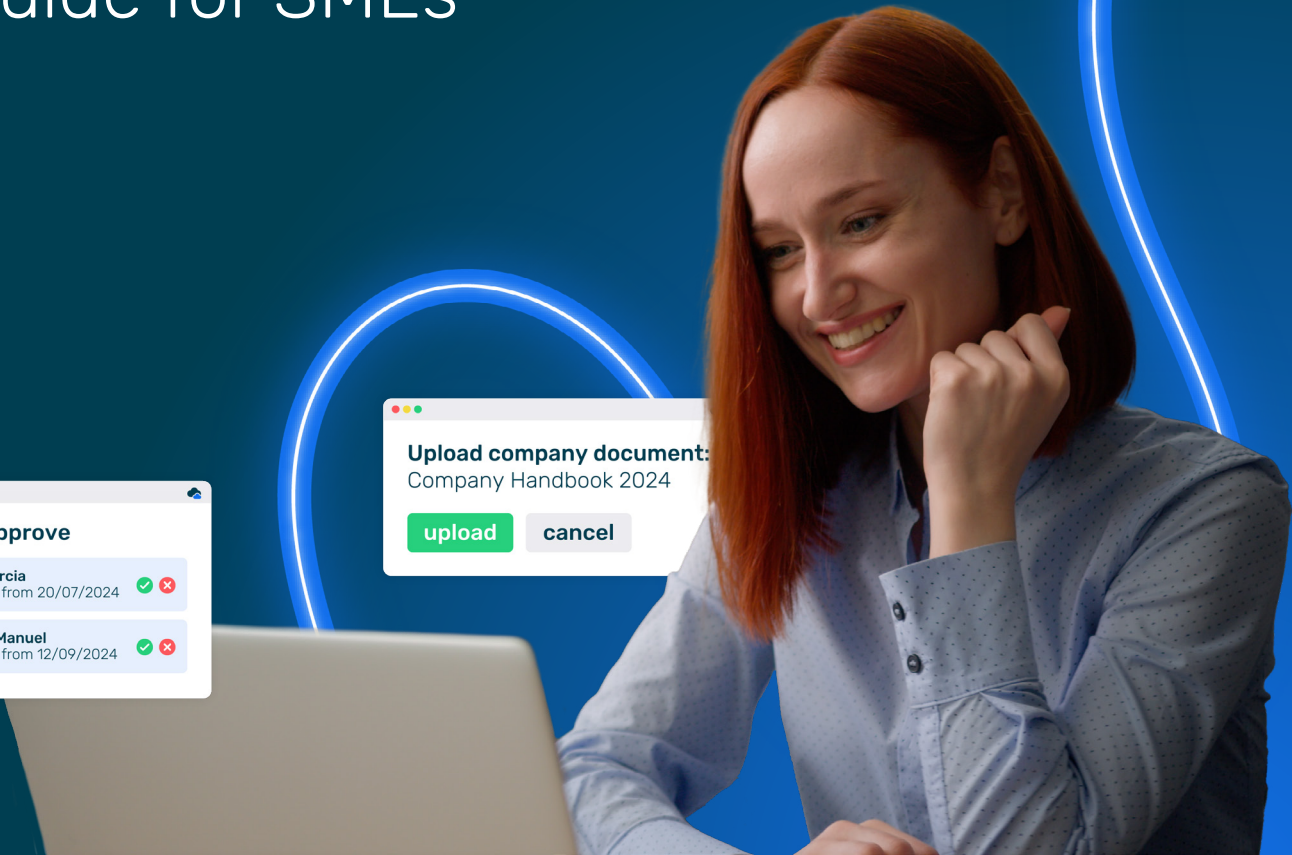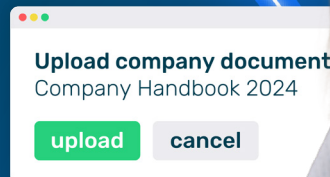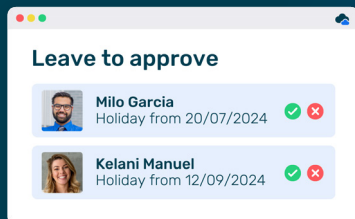
<u>Hey</u> there,

Choosing the right HR software for your business can feel like navigating a maze, right? Well, you're not alone. I'm Charlie O'Brien, Head of People at Breathe, and - working for an SME myself – I totally get it.

If you're a complete newbie, you may not even know where to start with HR software. That's why, here at Breathe, we've created this complete guide to show you the ropes and get you on the right track. Think of it as your HR software GPS – designed specifically for small businesses like yours.

We'll cover everything from what HR software is, what you should look for, how much it costs, data security – and much more. There's even a handy checklist included to help you with your software research.
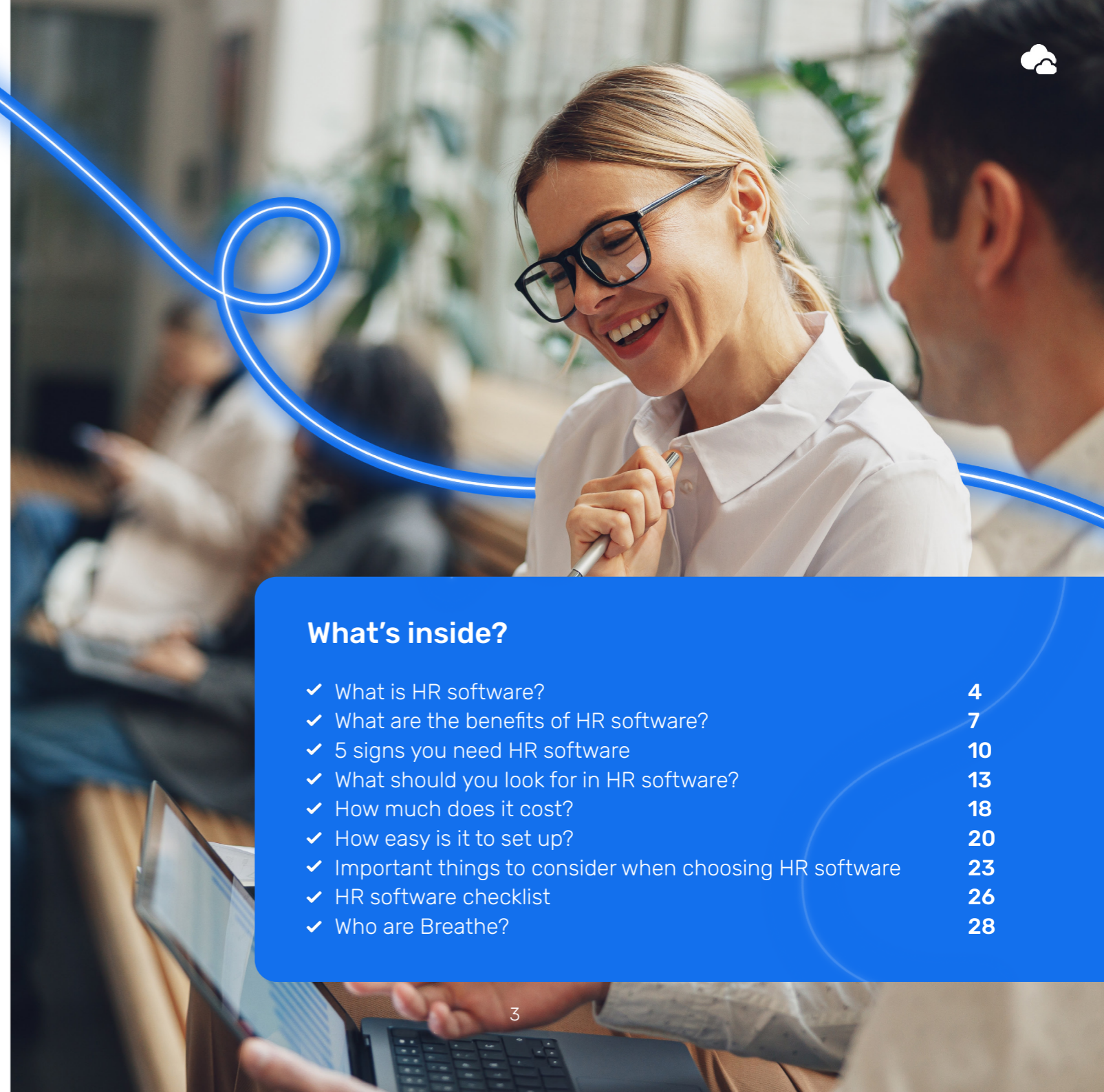
So, let's dive in and unravel the mysteries of HR software together. I promise we'll keep it **real, relatable & useful.**

Here's to making informed decisions and transforming your business for the better.

All the best,

Charlie O'Brien,
Head of People at Breathe

What's inside?

What is HR software?

How do you currently manage your HR admin? Maybe you have a folder of various spreadsheets, or perhaps you make do with filing cabinets and a holiday wall chart?

While these methods often 'do the job', in reality they're detrimental to your productivity and overall efficiency. This is why so many UK small businesses have made the switch to HR software.

HR software is an easy-to-use tool that's designed to save SMEs valuable time for the things that matter most.

Rather than using spreadsheets to keep track of things like holiday & employee details, HR software centralises, automates and simplifies people-processes – saving you bags of time and making life as a small business that bit easier.

HR software is normally cloud-based, too – so you can access your data from anywhere with an internet connection. (One of our users even booked leave from a truck in Colombia – check it out.)

It's time to **ditch spreadsheets** and take time back for the valuable work you do. Read on to discover how HR software can transform your processes in a **big** way.

4

With a system in place, you'll save valuable time on everyday HR tasks such as:

- ✔ Employee information management
- ✔ Sickness & absence tracking
- ✔ Holiday management
- ✔ Onboarding & offboarding
- ✔ Expense management
- ✔ Benefits administration
- ✔ Recruitment & applicant tracking (ATS)

- ✔ Time logging/rota scheduling
- ✔ Performance monitoring
- ✔ HR reporting
- ✔ E-learning
- ✔ Document storage
- ✔ Rota management
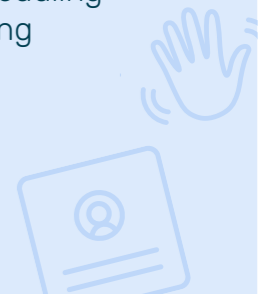
You can also:

- ✔ **Centralise** & **secure** employee data
- ✔ Improve **engagement**

- ✔ Support **audits**
- ✔ Enhance your **employee experience**

5
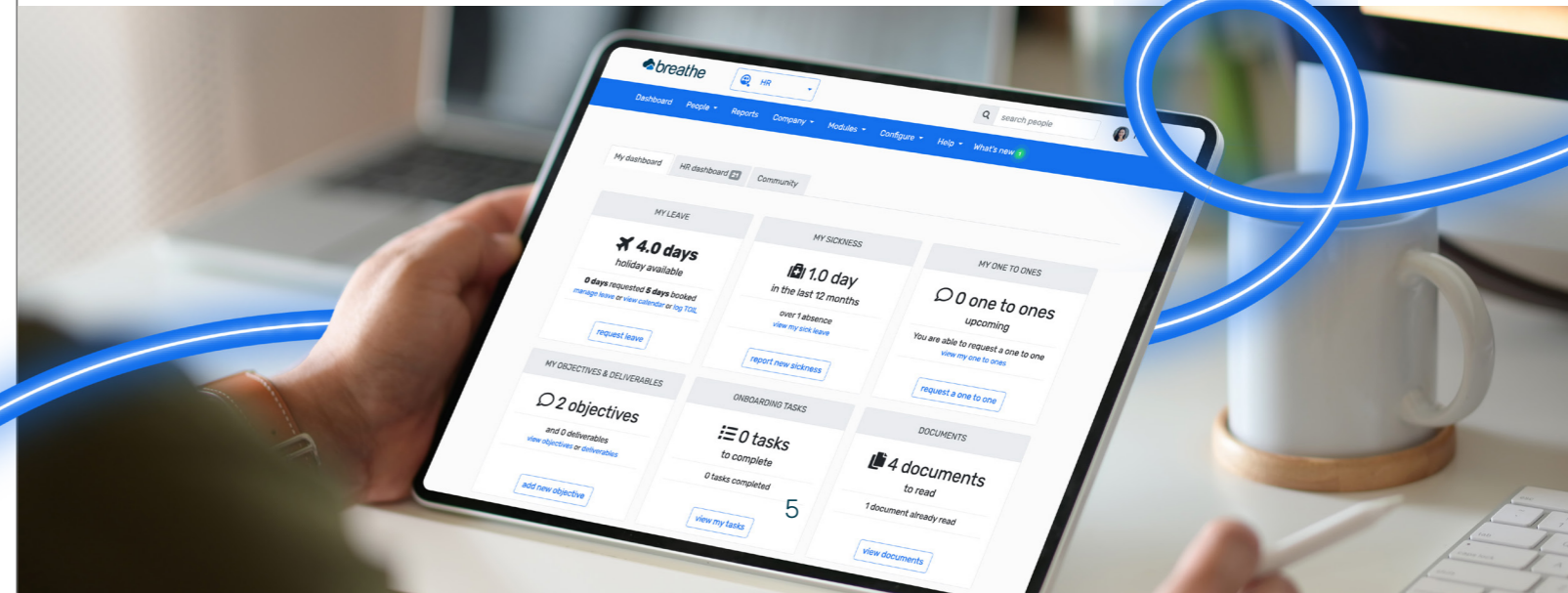
8 benefits of HR software over spreadsheets

1 Save valuable time on everyday admin

HR software is designed to simplify the management of HR processes and data.

It takes care of time-consuming day-to-day tasks including leave requests, updating employee information, expense management, HR reporting, organising employee documents – and so much more.

So, with more time on your side, you can focus on other important tasks & spend more time focusing on your people.

An average Breathe customer saves up to **4 hours each week**. What would you do with half a working day back?

2 Improve efficiency

Switching to an HR software platform not only means you'll have a better view of employee data, but your team will also have visibility of their remaining holiday allowances, personal details, sick days & more.

So, you'll save time on the never-ending admin and have more time for the bigger tasks. Result.

3 Keep your data secure

Keeping your data stored in the cloud rather than in filing cabinets & folders eliminates dangerous security risks and helps you stay GDPR compliant.

Plus, HR software that is ISO27001 accredited has achieved the world's best-known standard for data security. This means the organisation has put specific systems and procedures in place to protect the data they handle – including your employees' personal details, such as salaries and addresses.

Learn more

4 Reduce HR-related stress

With processes simplified, time saved, and data stored securely, you'll no longer need to worry about holiday request slips being lost, paperwork going missing or losing track of who's off & when – saving lots of unnecessary admin for you and your team.

5 Save money

As a small business, watching the pennies is likely to be a top priority.

But with time-consuming admin taken care of – which could otherwise be someone's full-time job – your bank balance will soon be thanking you.

Calculate ROI

You'll also save heaps of paper with an online system. In fact, our customers save an average of **11 sheets of paper a day**, equating to a third of a tree every year. What better way to become more eco-friendly?

6 Support remote working

Since the pandemic, many more businesses have embraced remote and hybrid working.

With HR software on board, it'll be easier than ever to keep track of where your people are working & when.

And thanks to it being cloud-based, you'll be able to access employee details and HR data from home, a coffee shop, or wherever you're working.

7 Access from anywhere

As most HR systems are now cloud-based, you can log in and access employee data wherever you might be. Historically, license-based systems meant access was limited to just one computer.

Now, whether you're at home, at your workplace or out & about – everything you'll ever need will be right at your fingertips.

8 Enhance the employee experience

By offering a modern, centralised system instead of old-fashioned paper documents and forms, you'll impress new employees right from the start of their journey with you. Even simple things such as online organisation charts make a new starter's experience smoother and make it easier for them to get to know your business.

Having an employee mobile app included in your HR software is also a great way of making your processes more enjoyable and convenient for everyone – even with simple things such as booking holiday or claiming an expense.

5 signs that you need HR software

Not used software to manage HR before? Are you trying to get by with spreadsheets, post-it notes or holiday wall-charts?

While these methods can do the job, they're time-consuming, stressful & unnecessary. Here are some classic signs that it's time for you to start exploring HR software and make the switch.

1 Your HR team are stressed

As your small business grows, the more your headcount will expand. While this is super exciting, it also means more manual admin and paperwork for your HR function – whether it's just you or a dedicated team.

With an HR system on board, you'll be able to automate and simplify these manual processes, keeping stress levels down and your HR team happy.

2 High employee turnover

Are more people leaving than usual? It could be a sign that your HR team are simply too stretched to address issues leading to unhappy employees.

With HR software in place, your HR team will save time on everyday admin and reduce their workload, meaning they'll have more time to spend with employees and identify issues before they become a bigger problem.

Plus, with tools like Breathe's Employee NPS feature you'll be able to dive into how your people are truly feeling, collect feedback to help you improve and monitor your progress over time.

3 Your employee onboarding process needs improving

Research tells us that companies with a structured onboarding programme keep 58% of their employees for 3 years. An employee's first few weeks is a critical time – it's all about first impressions and getting them integrated into the business, its culture, the people and their new role as quickly as possible.

Bombarding them with long documents and tedious forms is far from ideal.

But, with HR software, you can share documents digitally and see when your new starters have read them and keep an eye on the progress they're making.

And, with tools like Breathe's Learn module, you can even enrol them into simple online courses to cover off those crucial topics such as health & safety, internet usage and data security.

HR software also provides a fantastic opportunity for the new employee to get to know their colleagues, roles and team structure with a central 'organisation chart.

4 Data gets lost

Keeping employee data stored in filing cabinets? Managing holiday requests with post-it notes? If the answer is yes, you may have found yourself frantically searching your desk to find an employee file or holiday request – or finding that you've lost it altogether. Not only is this a significant GDPR risk, but it's stressful for you & your team.

With HR software, all data is stored digitally in the cloud – with top-notch security – meaning your people-data is kept water-tight whilst being accessible at any time.

Plus, software like Breathe is ISO27001 accredited - meaning that it's recognised for having the highest level of data security – so you can rest assured that your employee data is in safe hands.

5 Mistakes are being made

Manual processes can often lead to human errors. You might be finding that holiday allowances are inaccurate, reports aren't quite up to scratch and details are being missed.

With everyday tasks automated with HR software, you can relax knowing that everything is in hand and you'll have a record of it.

Leave to approve

Milo Garcia
Holiday from 20/07/2023 to 25/07/2023

Kalani Manuel
Holiday from 12/11/2023 to 14/11/2023

Amy Collins
Holiday from 03/09/2023 to 08/09/2023

Upcoming leave

Nadia Martin
Holiday starts on 14/10/2022

Rohan Devi
Holiday starts on 21/12/2022

What should you <u>look for</u> in HR software?

Employee database

As a UK employer, you're legally required to keep your employee data safe and secure – so it's important you look for a solution that offers a secure employee database.

With this in place, you'll be able to store employee records digitally and all in one place, rather than in filing cabinets or spreadsheets.

Self-service

With their own profile & log-in, employees can update their own information, submit holiday requests, log sickness (and loads more) completely independently. We'd recommend that you look for a solution that has an employee mobile app included, too.

Line managers will also be able to enjoy a self-service platform, where they can log in to respond to holiday requests, monitor sickness, build rotas and more.

Learn more about **storing employee records**

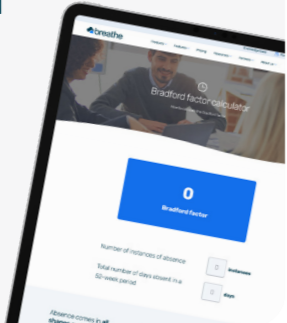**Learn more**
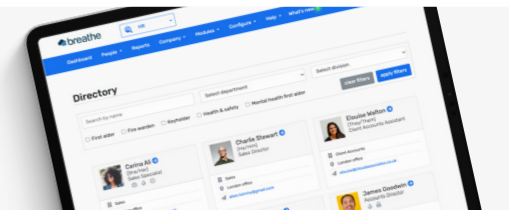
Holiday & sickness management

With a dedicated system to help you manage leave and sickness, you can ditch spreadsheets, post-it notes, emails and wall-charts.

Holiday allowances and statutory holidays are automatically calculated, saving you hours of time. Employees can request holiday in seconds, which will go straight through to their holiday approver for review. (We'd recommend you keep your eye out for a holiday calendar, which will make it easy to check for any clashes before approving leave.)

Sickness can be logged all in one place, with the ability to monitor an employee's Bradford factor, making it easy to stay on top of any trends.

Calculate Bradford factor scores in **seconds** with our free calculator

Calculate

Commitment-free

With a flexible, commitment-free plan, you can rest assured that you're not tied in and can cancel at any time should you need to.

We'd recommend looking for a solution that offers a free trial so that you can 'try before you buy', as well as the ability to cancel or upgrade at any time. Flexibility is key.

Reporting

This one is a 'must' for any HR software. With powerful reports, you can dive deeper into your people-data and easily spot any trends with sickness or performance, get a quick overview of holiday usage or instantly export any information that's needed (e.g. birthdays or emergency contacts).

Unlimited document storage

You'll have the ability to store company handbooks and policies, as well as personal employee documents, such as annual appraisal notes, all safely in the cloud. And with a tool that offers unlimited document storage, you can cut right back on your paper consumption (and stress, too).

Integration with your payroll software

This will save you hours of time. Instead of updating employee details in each system, the two systems will talk to each other and keep all employee information up to date. No more errors or manual data changes, just useful automation and extra time on your hands.

Easy to tailor to your business

With the ability to customise your plan according to your business' needs, you'll stay in control and only pay for what you need.

For example, Breathe has a collection of value-packed additional modules that you can add to your plan where needed, including rota & timesheet management, e-learning, expense management and more.

Free trial/demo

With a free trial, you can explore each area of the system as you want to, in your own free time – with absolutely no pressure. Systems like Breathe offer a generous 14-day trial – all for free – with no credit card needed.

Alternatively, you may prefer a one-to-one demonstration of the software with a member of the sales team. If this is your preference, make sure you include this in your criteria.

Cloud-based

Always look for a system that's cloud-based. Here's why:

✓ Cloud-based systems offer much more robust data **security**

✓ You'll be able to access your data from **anywhere** with an internet connection

✓ Access won't be limited to licenses (e.g. to just one computer), making it easier if you work from home or **different locations**.

Explore our FAQs to see why storing HR documents **in the cloud** makes business sense.

Learn more

ISO27001 accredited

We'd recommend you look for a provider that's ISO27001 accredited. This is a certification that demonstrates the company has gone over & above to invest in the tools and systems that are needed to protect their customers' data.

Super-quick set-up time

Some solutions take weeks to get up & running due to their complex processes, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Some systems – like Breathe – can be fully set up in just a few hours, thanks to its simple design and straightforward data import.

Why wait?

How much does HR software cost?

The cost of HR software can differ from product to product – and this really depends on the level of functionality you're looking for and the size of your business. Larger businesses are likely to need a more complex system, which can cost thousands each month. But, if you're a small business looking to switch from spreadsheets or filing cabinets for the very first time, there's no need to splash out.

It's important to watch out for additional and potentially hidden costs – some solutions may charge extra for implementation or integration building, for example.

Flexibility is key, too. We'd recommend that you look for a solution which allows you to cancel at any time. Some products tie you in for between 3-5 years, which is far from ideal for a small business.

Products like Breathe are designed with **simplicity** and **ease of use**, which is ideal for small businesses who are looking to save time on everyday tasks.

Breathe's prices start from **just £18** per month for 1–10 employees, with the option to pay monthly or annually.

Calculate your cost

How easy is it to set up?

It's easy to assume that any software package takes weeks or months to set up. And whilst this is true for many HR software solutions, this isn't always the case.

After all, no small business has the time to spare – right?

You'll want to look out for key factors that may delay the process. These can include:

- ✕ A **clunky** data upload process
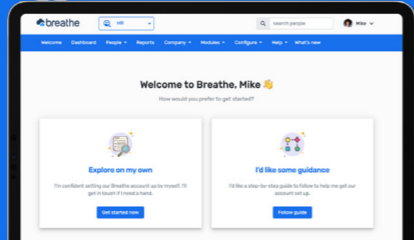- ✕ Lack of **resource**
- ✕ **Complicated** software

Luckily, Breathe is designed to be set up super quickly. In fact, some of our customers are up and running in as little as a few hours.

So, what does this process involve? Here's an overview of Breathe's setup journey.

> "Although new to Breathe, we have found it extremely intuitive and **straight-forward to set up**"
>
> **- Verified customer**

Read more reviews

---

1 **Select your plan size**

Time to get started. Choose 1 of our 6 different plans, depending on the size and needs of your SME.

2 **Start your free 14-day trial**

Explore the full system for FREE for 2 whole weeks and discover the benefits of Breathe for yourself. In this time, you can set up your own live account, with your own employee info (no dummy data here), so you can get started in no time at all.

Our friendly team will be on-hand to help with any questions you might have along the way.

3 **Set up & customise your account**

Populate your data using our handy tools and customise your Breathe account to suit your organisation.

4 **Launch Breathe to your organisation**

It's time to roll out your new HR software to your people. Send out your welcome emails and get your team up to speed with Breathe with our simple user courses.

Our software is super-simple, but we have hundreds of useful guides, videos and resources to help you out should you ever need them.

How easy is that?

Important [things to consider](#) when choosing HR software

Return on investment (ROI)

While you're likely to be on the hunt for the right product for your business, cost is an important factor – especially as a small business.
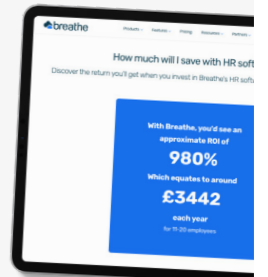
There are usually 2 different ways that HR software is priced: either per employee, or per account, depending on which model works best for your business.

We'd recommend you search for a software that offers high return on investment (ROI).

You'll want to make sure that for what you're paying out, you're getting maximum value in return.

Use our **free** instant calculator to discover what your small business' return would be

Calculate ROI

Data security

Your HR system will store incredibly sensitive information such as addresses, dates of birth, medical information, and sometimes even salaries & bank details – and it's your responsibility to keep this safe to avoid any data breaches. It goes without saying that it's super-important that you choose a robust system that you trust to keep your people data water-tight. You should keep an eye out for:

✔ **Two-factor authentication (2FA)** – this means that, as well as their password, anyone logging into their account will need to provide an additional factor that only they can source, such as a code from their mobile device. This adds another layer of security to your data, so is definitely something you should look for.

✔ **ISO27001 accreditation** – as we mentioned in the last section, this is a certification that demonstrates a solid commitment to data security.

✔ Software hosted in a **reliable and robust data centre** - such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), which uses a multi-layer security structure.

Who would you like to enable 2FA for?

Everyone	OFF
HR Users	ON
Line managers	OFF
Finance users	ON

User experience

If you're rolling out a brand-new software to your whole organisation, you'll want to choose a solution that provides an enjoyable user experience. If the software is clunky and frustrating to use, your team may be reluctant to use it & will quickly become disengaged.

Remember that HR software contributes to the employee experience at your business – right from a new starter's very first day – so it's important you spend some time considering the user experience.

Easy implementation

With any new software comes some setting up. And with an already busy job, the last thing you want is having to spend several weeks (or even months) getting your new HR software up & running. Luckily, not all solutions come with lengthy implementation times and multiple onboarding sessions. With a simple, self-service product like Breathe, you could get your business fully set up in just days, not weeks.

Learn more

"I've used Breathe as an employee and as a team lead - processes for both roles were **easy** and **intuitive**"

- **Verified customer**   **Read more reivews**

HR software
checklist

Here's a useful list of things you should look for when evaluating HR software. Use this as your very own guide & tick each one off as you go.

Rather tick these manually? Here's one you can print:

Print checklist

Functionality

☐ Employee database

☐ Absence management

☐ Performance management

☐ Unlimited document storage

☐ Organisation chart

☐ Kudos tool

☐ Applicant tracking system (ATS)

☐ E-learning

☐ Email employees

☐ Easy to use

☐ Onboarding/offboarding

☐ Disciplinary/grievance management

☐ Bulk updates

☐ Benefit administration

☐ Employee & HR dashboards

☐ HR reporting

☐ Employee mobile app

☐ Employee NPS

Flexibility

☐ Free trial/demo

☐ Cancel at any time

☐ Built for SMEs

☐ Fast implementation

☐ Self-service

☐ Ability to grow with your business

☐ Value for money

☐ Clear and simple pricing

Security

☐ ISO27001 accredited

☐ GDPR compliant

☐ Two-factor authentication (2FA)

☐ Cloud-based

Other things you may need to consider

☐ Integration with payroll software (e.g. Xero Payroll)

☐ Rota management & timesheets

☐ Expense management

Who are **Breathe?**

breathe

We're Breathe, and our mission is simple: to empower busy small businesses to reclaim precious time by simplifying their people admin.

Our affordable & award-winning HR software is the trusted choice for over 14,000 SMEs, seamlessly transforming everyday people-tasks into effortless efficiencies.
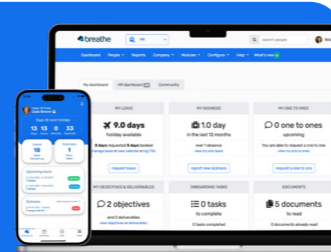
With water-tight, ISO27001-accredited software, you can enjoy peace of mind that your people-data is in safe hands and that your SME is maintaining GDPR compliance.

With Breathe's easy-to-use HR software, you can:

✔ Save up to **4 hours** every week on people admin

✔ **Tailor your plan** with additional modules

✔ Keep costs down with the **best-value** HR software available

✔ Stay **GDPR-compliant** with ISO27001-accredited software

✔ Enjoy a **FREE 14-day trial** - no credit card required

✔ Keep things **simple** with software that's designed for SME

Ready to **transform** your HR processes? Discover the benefits of Breathe & start your FREE 14-day trial today.

Try Breathe for free

280+ reviews
★★★★★ | 4.4

Most Implementable
WINTER
2024

Leader
WINTER
2024

Best Results
Small Business
WINTER
2024

"Breathe has saved us time, money and complicated spreadsheets"

We love it. It's easy to use, quick to set up and is constantly evolving to support our needs.

- Verified customer

"Amazing feature-set for the value"

We use Breathe to manage our small business HR needs. It includes so many featured for it's pricepoint & it's always expanding.

- Verified customer

Read more reviews