



How to reduce unverified hours by 30%

(without punishing your staff)

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Introduction from the Author: Understanding “Unverified Hours”

Hi, John here. I've been writing and reporting on issues affecting the workplace since 2012, and I have a special interest in how technology can become a significant part of the solution.

When I talk about “unverified hours”, I'm talking about paid staff time that isn't verified by reliable data. For example, when a staff member forgets to clock in, or a shift log is missing an end time. This data might end up being populated based on expected shift times, or “best guess” methodology. But the hours have not been verified, and may therefore be inaccurate.

Across UK frontline sectors, industry estimates suggest that 2-6% of paid hours are unverified – that's around 1-2 hours per person, per week. But this playbook is not about blame.

So instead of talking about heavy-handed surveillance and punishments, I will be showing you how to implement three simple automations. Done right, these easy workflows could cut your unverified hours by 15-30% within the next 6 weeks.

John Crowley
Editor





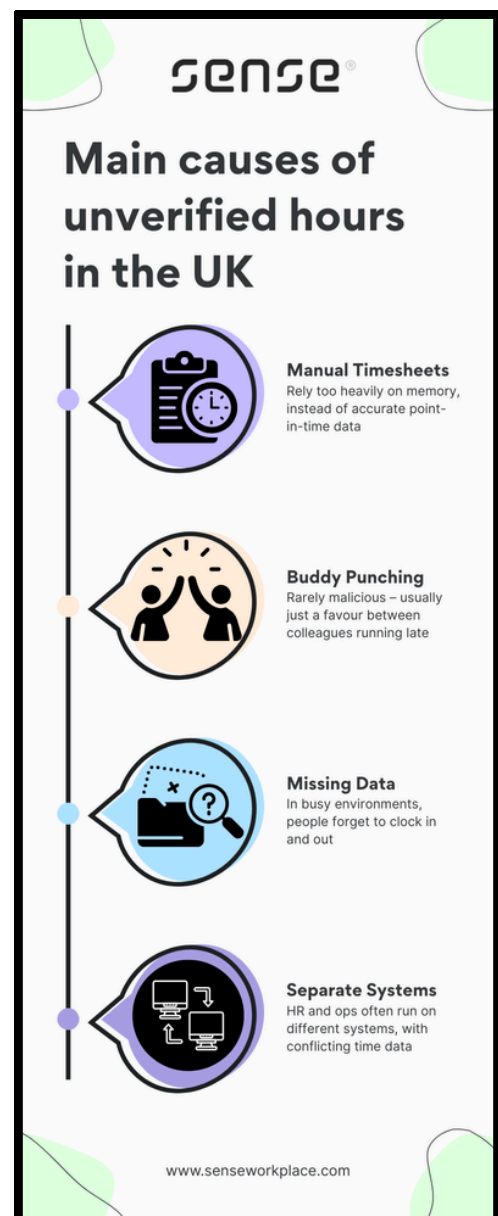
Why “Unverified Hours” Slip Through the Net

If unverified hours sound like a minor admin issue, then think again. They're often a symptom of process gaps – the small disconnects between your people and your systems.

The most common culprits of unverified hours are:

- Manual or paper timesheets
- Buddy punching
- Missed clock entries
- Disconnected systems

Across the UK frontline workforce, industry estimates suggest that between 2% and 6% of paid hours are unverified. And once corrections and overtime are factored in, this still equates to around 2% to 4% payroll waste.





How This Happens

Manual or Paper Timesheets

These often rely on memory, instead of accurate, point-in-time data. A missed entry or a rushed signature can easily equal 10-15 minutes per person, per shift.

Buddy Punching

It's rarely malicious – and usually just a favour between colleagues who are running late. But those small favours can quietly add up to thousands of minutes a month.

Missed Clock Entries

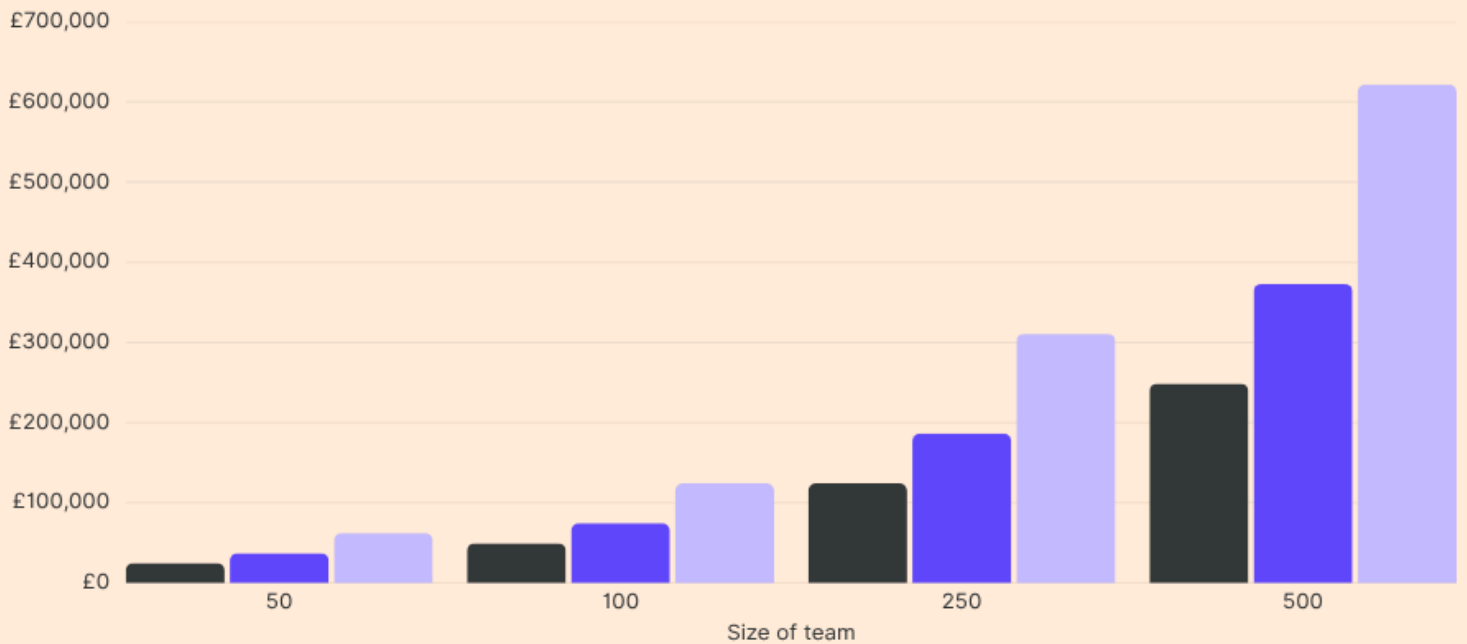
In busy environments, people forget to clock in or out, not just at the start and end of their shifts, but also when moving between work stations or break zones.

Disconnected Systems

HR and operations often run on separate tools – one manages people and pay, the other manages time and tasks. When the systems don't talk, pay data enters a grey area.

The Cost of Unverified Hours

● 2% Unverified ● 3% Unverified ● 5% Unverified



The Financial Impact

The percentages might sound low, but even the smallest of numbers add up. For example, one of our clients hires around 250 frontline staff, each working 37.5 hours a week, with an average hourly rate of £12.75. If even just 3% of hours go unverified, that adds up to 281 hours per week – or £3,600 in payroll value.

Scale that to 500+ employees, and you're quickly looking at £400,000-£500,000 a year, in paid wages where the time hasn't been verified. And again, this is not normally because people are dishonest, but because the systems don't catch the gaps.

Even a one-point reduction in unverified hours can return tens of thousands of pounds a year, with no need to change your staffing levels.

But it's not just a financial problem. Having so many unverified hours slipping through your system affects trust and morale, too – especially when managers have to challenge staff with incomplete data.

Nobody likes having to defend their timesheets. How do you even try to remember exactly what you were doing at 9:04am last Thursday? Most team members just want to get on with their jobs, and know that they're going to be paid fairly and accurately without having to fight it.

The good news is that these gaps are fixable. With a few targeted automations, you can capture presence data automatically, reconcile it with HR records, and make sure every paid hour is a verified one.

Implementing a Smarter Fix

There's an easy way to tackle the above, and verify almost every hour that you pay for – without breathing down people's necks, and without forcing any extra admin onto people's busy working days. Over the next few pages, I'm going to walk you through three easy automations, each of which takes less than an hour to build.

You may be able to build these automations with other systems and tools, so if you're not a Sense Workplace customer then this playbook may still be useful. But for this guide, I'm going to assume that you're already using Sense Workplace, and that you have access to the capabilities listed on the right.

Sense Presence: This system reads location data from your various workplaces and works out where your people are.

Sense Automate: This is the workflow engine that runs in the background – you use this engine to set triggers and reactions, and this is how you'll set up your three key automations.

Sense HR: This is the main source of truth for all of your people data, including work patterns, contracts, locations, and more.

If you're not yet a Sense Workplace customer, you can [book a demo with one of our friendly UK-based experts here.](#)

Time and attendance									
People									
Name	Job title	Clock-in time	Clock-out time	Verification	Status				
Abbi Melville	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Excess hours				
Gary Middleton	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Working				
Anne Hawkings	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Innactive				
Caro Soleno	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Not verified	Working				
James Fox	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Not working				
Gabriella Lignarolo	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Working				
May Johnson	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Not verified	Working				
Eleanor Jain	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Not verified	Off duty				
Samantha Page	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Not verified	Session replication				
Anne Michaels	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Working				
Esther howard	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Not working				
Michael Sturman	Engineer	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	8:09 am Feb 6 2024	Verified	Working				

Automation 1: Late or Missed Check-Out

We designed this workflow for one of our facilities sites, where managers would spend every Friday chasing paper timesheets.

After enabling this automation, 92% of their missing check-outs were resolved automatically within 24 hours.

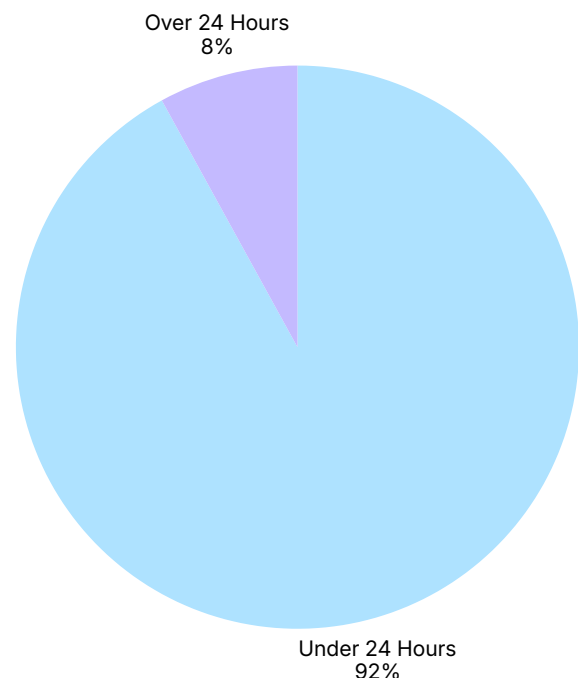
1. **The Trigger:** Shift ends with no check-out recorded within a set time window (e.g. 15 minutes after the shift ends)
2. **The Action:** Automatically flag the shift as "unverified" and send a friendly reminder to the employee and their supervisor
3. **The Outcome:** Supervisor reviews and confirms the correct end time in the system, ensuring the hours are validated

This simple workflow will remind workers and their supervisors of missed check-outs within a fast time window, ensuring accurate shift activity is still fresh in their memory. You may need to tweak this depending on how your process works.

Want to learn more about this workflow?
[Book a demo with one of our experts for a free 15-minute walkthrough.](#)

"92% of our missing check-outs got resolved within 24 hours by using this automation – our supervisors spend much less time chasing timesheet gaps than they did before"

Time to Resolve Missed Check-Outs



Automation 2: No-Show at Start of Shift

We set this workflow up with a retail client, reducing missed-start disputes by 40%. Supervisors now see a single dashboard of all “no-shows” in real time, instead of finding out the next day. Shifts are fully-staffed more often, too.

1. **The Trigger:** A scheduled shift begins and no presence is detected in the assigned zone within a few minutes of start time.
2. **The Action:** The system notifies the site manager who confirms the absence and checks the cover list for available replacements.
3. **The Outcome:** The site manager can keep the floor staffed and record the absence accurately, without paying for a shift that never started.

No-shows are sometimes not noticed until part way through the working day when a manual headcount takes place, at which point the team is already behind on their workload, and it may be too late to find appropriate cover.

Want to learn more about this workflow?
[Book a demo with one of our experts for a free 15-minute walkthrough.](#)

“We reduced missed start disputes by 40% – something that was causing a lot of friction between staff and supervisors”



Automation 3: Repeated Mismatches

One of our manufacturing clients suspected buddy punching, due to suspicious clock-in data. This process actually helped them identify a faulty gateway instead of time theft – showing that verified data protects both staff and management.

1. **The Trigger:** The same pair of badges repeatedly clock in or out within seconds of each other at the same gateway.
2. **The Action:** The system requests a badge re-check or secondary verification (e.g. supervisor confirmation)
3. **The Outcome:** Attendance records are accurate, without anybody feeling accused – and genuine mistakes are caught early.

Buddy punching isn't always ill-intentioned. Sometimes it's done to avoid both friends queuing up at the clock machine. But it can be a major source of unverified hours, with some of those hours filtering through as payroll waste.

Want to learn more about this workflow?
[Book a demo with one of our experts for a free 15-minute walkthrough.](#)

"Staff have been known to clock in for each other in the past, but we don't like to jump to conclusions. This workflow helps us investigate quickly, often proving a person's innocence"





Maintaining Culture and Privacy

Introducing any system that captures location or time data needs to be handled with precision and clarity. The aim is to set clear rules, limit data to what's necessary, and make compliance automatic.

Here are our top tips for increasing adoption, calming fears, and protecting data:

1. Use Badges and Gateways, Not Phones and Cameras.

By installing a handful of Sense Gateways at your premise, and giving team members a Sense Badge, you're ensuring no work apps ever need to be installed on personal phones. What's more, staff will know that you're not trying to use microphone, camera, or GPS data to pinpoint their location.

2. Track Defined Workplace Zones Only.

Ensure you're only tracking presence in pre-approved workplace zones, such as entrances, break areas, production lines, workstations, etc. Ensure that you're not recording location outside of work locations or scheduled shifts.

3. Maintain GDPR Audit Logs.

Check that Sense Workplace is configured so that every read, alert, or manual override is timestamped and stored, for an immutable audit trail. Storing this data securely in Sense supports GDPR compliance, and will protect both you and your team members, for example if attendance data is ever challenged.

4. Control Access and Retention.

Set up permission levels within your Sense Workplace system to limit which people can view Presence data. You'll need to be able to justify why each person needs access to that data, as well as making sure you are setting the data to be purged or anonymised after the retention period defined in your GDPR policy (typically 90-180 days).

5. Document Exception Procedures.

For cases where you are correcting, verifying or manually overriding previously unverified hours, make sure you have a simple, written process you can refer to. This should explain how you handle missing reads, lost badges, or shift changes – so that every discrepancy has a traceable, legitimate fix.



Expected Results and ROI

Once these automations are live, the improvements are easy to measure, and you might be surprised at how fast they arrive. In fact, we have been measuring the results of these automations at some of our client sites, and across most teams we see unverified hours fall by 15-30% within just six weeks.

- **Unverified hours reduced:** 15-30% within 4-6 weeks. The percentage drop we see tends to depend on the sector, while the time it takes to see the results tends to be influenced by the size of the workforce – some clients prefer to roll these automations out in phases across their teams.
- **Payroll accuracy increased:** 5-10% improvement in the accuracy of data sent to payroll in the first instance, and we see an overall 2-4% reduction in payroll waste being paid out.
- **Supervisor admin time reduced:** Around 50% at most sites. For example, in cases where supervisors were spending up to 2 hours a week trying to backdate gaps in timesheets, most of our clients recorded that this dropped to 1 hour.

A close-up of a payroll slip. The slip lists various deductions and the final 'This Pay' amount. The 'This Pay' amount is 388.27.

	This Pay
Gross Pay	388.27
Pension	0.00
AVC's	0.00
Taxable Pay	388.27
Tax	0.00
NI	0.00
SP	0.00
p	0.00

"We can now afford to bring two more people in on weekends – our regular weekend staff are happy for the help, and the two new heads are grateful for the extra hours!"

These improvements quickly add up. For a 100-person team averaging £12.75 an hour, this could save you around £2,500-£3,000 – which, in the case of one of our clients, left them with enough budget to increase their headcount on their busiest days, significantly reducing pressure on their hardest-working staff members.

About Sense Workplace

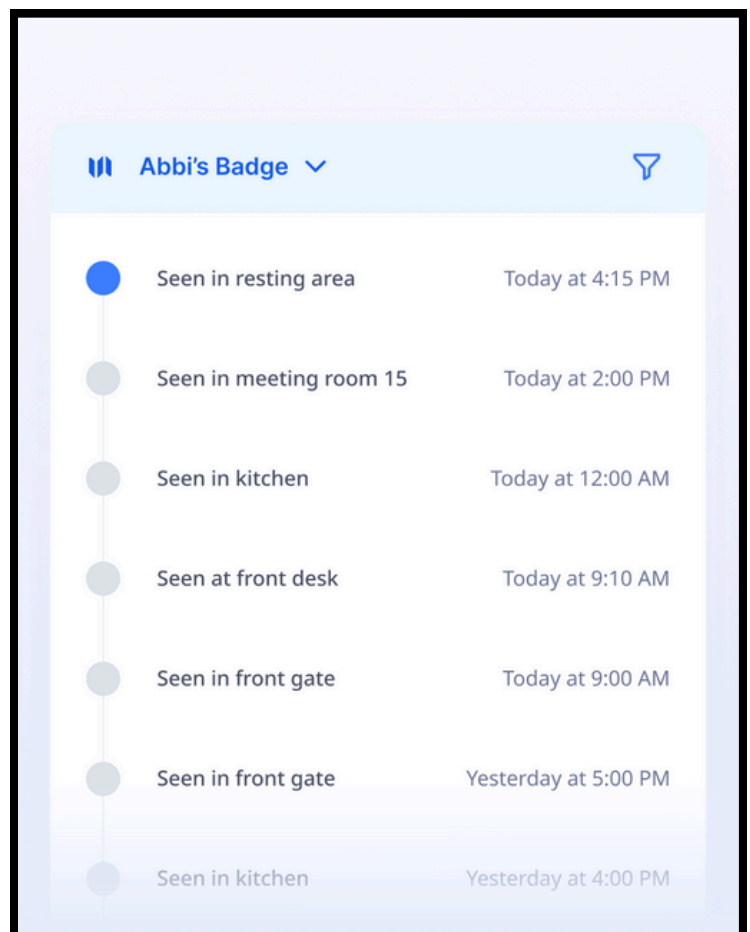
Sense Workplace delivers hardware, software and services that help organisations manage a modern, mobile workforce. These organisations often rely on workers who are not tethered to a central office, but instead may be working from home, travelling between different client sites, or stationed within large complex buildings or sprawling campuses. These organisations may also hire people who have multiple jobs, and may rely on a variety of non-standard employment contracts including seasonal, casual, zero-hour and freelance.

Sense Workplace brings all HR and operational data into one central platform, and gives busy organisations an easy way to automate their HR admin, locate and manage their staff, assign and verify tasks, and discover operational insights that reveal how their teams operate and how their workspaces are being used.

Our team is made up of workplace technology experts with many years of experience in the field. We have teams in Romania, Canada and India, but our main head office is based in Epworth, UK - a small but beautiful village just outside Doncaster.

We'd love to hear from you!

Our friendly team of UK experts are always happy to answer your questions, send more information, or even give you a personalised tour of the Sense Workplace platform. [Take a look for yourself by booking a call today!](#)



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