



Able

The trust layer for work

17 August 2026

Innovate UK backs Able to make verified hospitality workers instantly bookable

As operators absorb more legal risk on every shift they fill, the London platform has won Women in Innovation funding to build the verification layer behind work; removing the application-and-interview loop for flexible work and modernising hiring.

Able, the staffing platform for hospitality and events, has been awarded £75,000 through Innovate UK's Women in Innovation programme, part of the Department for Business and Trade, and one of the UK's most competitive grants for female-founded technology companies. The twelve-month project began on 1 July 2026 and builds the verification infrastructure sitting beneath Able's live fair work, ethical platform, where London venues already book verified, available workers in minutes.

The award lands as the compliance burden on shift-based employers moves sharply in one direction. Liability across labour supply chains tightened in April, right-to-work checking is moving towards digital identity, and hiring fraud is rising fast enough to have become a board-level question in sectors that have never treated it as one. For a general manager filling a Friday night, the practical problem is unchanged and sharpening: someone unfamiliar walks in, and there is no fast, trustworthy way to establish what they can do or whether they are entitled to be there.

Able's answer is to verify once and re-use. Workers build a profile carrying their skills, availability, credentials and a short video introduction, and are then offered shifts that fit — so nobody applies, browses or sits through an interview for a single evening's work. Venues pay a flat 8 per cent; workers pay nothing, keep 100 per cent of what they earn, and are paid within 24 hours. Venues book last-minute or weeks ahead, and hire permanently from the same verified pool.

The matching engine is AI-enhanced and works pseudonymously, never seeing names, photographs, gender or nationality, and Able uses recognition in place of star ratings, with training and development part of the service.

The innovation sits in the combination. Verification is what makes speed possible, and speed is what removes the cost that both sides of the trade have absorbed for decades; the manager ringing round late at night, the worker chasing shifts that never materialise, the anxiety that sits underneath insecure work. Research published in the British Journal of Industrial Relations in 2024 found people on zero-hours contracts almost twice as likely to report mental ill health as those on other contracts. Making a verified

worker instantly bookable takes time, stress and uncertainty out of the process for the venue and the worker at once.

Able is live and transacting, with multi-booking clients including Mission Kitchen, the London food and drink innovation hub, and RecWorks, the technology recruitment consultancy, both booking repeatedly through the platform and stating that they trust the quality of service above all else. Able is a delivery partner on the government's Connect to Work programme across nine East London boroughs, alongside backing from the Mayor of London's office.

The Innovate UK project extends the verification work into credentials a worker owns and carries between employers, built on emerging international standards for digital identity — infrastructure Able is proving on its own marketplace ahead of offering it more widely.

Venue managers keep asking me where they post the job," said Alexandra Wright, founder and CEO of Able. "But they don't. We don't have a job board, because shifts get filled instantly from our bookable pool. That question is the whole problem; an industry so used to a broken process that the absence of it reads as a missing feature. Operators have paid agency rates for reassurance and got remarkably little of it for the money. We are building the trust layer underneath flexible work, so that a qualified person who is free on Friday is simply bookable on Friday."

Venues can book staff at app.able.global. Workers can build a profile at the same address. More at able.global.

— ends —

Notes to editors

- Able AI Agent Limited, company number 16302164, trading as Able. Founded by Alexandra Wright, previously a vice president at BlackRock and a manager at Deloitte.
- The Innovate UK Women in Innovation award was confirmed on 29 April 2026. The project runs from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.
- Available on request: interviews with Alexandra Wright; client references including Mission Kitchen and RecWorks; video testimonials; imagery and brand assets.
- Able is insured through Hiscox: £1m public and products liability, £100k professional indemnity, £100k cyber and data protection.
- Media contact: Alexandra Wright, aw@able.global, +44 7932 751 814