

# Temporary work in the UK

Anne Fairweather

REC External Relations  
Manager



## Introduction

- › REC
- › UK market
- › UK regulation
- › Temporary workers – satisfaction levels
- › Future outlook



## The REC

- » Represent 8000 agencies
- » UK market mainly SMEs
- » Code of Professional Practice
- » 1.2 million temps per week placed
- » Over 700 000 permanent placements



## REC: Services for members

- › Legal helpline, reference guide, standard documents
- › Professional development, training, degree
- › Standards – inspection team, self assessment forms, Professional Standards Committee
- › Audited options: diversity, education



## REC: Industry Research Unit

- › 2006 recruitment industry census
- › Annual industry survey
- › 360° tracking survey
- › Recruitment 20:20



## Diversity of the UK market

- » Fragmented industry
- » Diversity of type of placements
- » Diversity in services for businesses
- » Allows for adaptation to new business markets and to the flexible labour market



## UK Regulation

- » 1973 Employment Agencies Act & 2003 Conduct Regulations update
  - » Tightly regulates relationship between agency and client and between agency and candidate
  - » DTI EAS Inspectorate polices the Act. Can issue fines, close down agencies and ban directors from running employment agencies



## UK Regulation: employment status

- › Most temps are ‘workers’ engaged on a contract for services
  - › Comprehensive working rights include: working time, minimum wage, health and safety, equal access to health services
  - › Do not receive earned rights – unfair dismissal, redundancy payments, right to maternity/paternity leave
  - › Complaints are dealt with by employment tribunal system





## UK Regulation: why a contract for services?

- » Contract of employment involves a mutuality of obligation
- » Temporary workers on contracts for services
  - » Assignments can be terminated at anytime by both sides
  - » No exclusivity
- » Working rights, and those under the EAA are always available



## New focus on enforcement

- › Success at work – no change on employment status and temps' rights
- › New focus on vulnerable agency workers
  - › Pilot projects – integrating rights
  - › Provision of services by the agency
- › Gangmaster Licensing Authority
- › Targeted DTI inspections



## Are temp workers satisfied?

- › REC funded research: satisfaction levels around 80%
- › Kings College London: found temporary workers are happier and healthier than their permanent counterparts
- › No wide spread abuse, REC committed to ensure that all temps enjoy their rights – happy to work with Trade Unions



## The future.....

- » Pressure from REC
  - » Drive up standards through services and products eg REC Audited, Diversity Assured
- » Working with Government
  - » Relationship with Job Centre Plus, vulnerable workers



## The future.....

- › UK labour market
  - › Raising employment levels to 80% – agency contribution on diversity, re-integration
  - › Freud report March 07
  - › Raising Skills levels – retraining, outplacement, new experiences, Construction Sector Group



## UK outlook

- » Temporary agency work – a strong component of the UK labour market model
- » Responds to need for flexibility from workers
- » Responds to need for flexibility from companies
- » Bridges gaps to keep workers in the labour market

