

When contractors are between contracts, they still get paid

Let's say your first contract with an agency runs out, and you're not finished [negotiating a new one](#), or the agency just hasn't gotten around to renewing with you yet.

You want to keep working for the same client, and so you continue to show up at the site while you liaise with the agency about getting more money or changing your hours.

The Same Conditions Apply Until The New Contract is Signed

What do you do about the work you're performing in between contracts?

"Clearly the rates determined by the previous contract apply until you negotiate a new one," explains John Kell, policy director for the London-based [Professional Contractors Group](#). "It doesn't matter that no contract is currently in place. If you are doing the same work, you should be paid at the same rate that you were previously. Surely there is no reason why you should be paid less or more until a new agreement is in place."

The Rate for the Job

True, there is now no contract in place. But the client and the agency have a choice: either they inform the contractor that the contractors should stop showing up at work, or they pay the contractor. "A person who works gets paid in the UK unless some special agreement to the contrary (i.e. volunteer work, internship) is made. This is true regardless of all other conditions. And there is no reason to assume that the work valued at a certain amount previously should suddenly be worth less."

It's simple: unless the contractor is sent home, the contractor gets paid.

But Don't Wait To Renew

It is even the case that in certain industries, months may go by while contract negotiations take place. In the film industry it is customary for actors to complete an entire film before the incredibly complex contracts that apply are signed. This is standard practice in the film industry, and everyone expects it.

It would, however, probably be wrong to apply this strategy to contracting. You should take care to renew your contract well before it runs out, and you should see that the agency provides you with a responsible reply before the contract runs out. If you don't get one, you should warn the client that you may have to stop work, and that should be sufficient to light a fire under the agency's nether parts.

"It is really up to all parties-- the contractor, the client, the agency-- to take action in good time to arrange contract renewal," Kell warns. "Not doing so is really bad practice on the part of the agency or the client." And the same goes for the contractor.

You Can't Be Locked In

It is one of the most basic conditions of work in the UK that we can all choose where and how we work. We agree to the conditions fixed by the contract; these conditions do not sneak up on us and tie us up unaware. A contract is, by definition, something freely entered into. When you show up to work, unless someone tells you to go away, you have rights and privileges that don't change unless you stop working.

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“ The rates determined by your previous contract apply to work in the interim until the new contract is agreed to ”

John Kell-PCG

“ A person who works in the UK gets paid regardless of any other conditions ”

John Kell-PCG

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