

Contractors still under attack by organised labour

Pressure from organised labour on the contracting industry has not abated.

Contractors need to organise themselves as well, or to suffer attacks from lawmakers like the one on [managed service companies](#) that we have just witnessed.

For Unions, Contracting is a Disgrace

Speaking on April 12, [Transport and General Workers' Union](#) general secretary Tony Woodley stated that big-name companies are taking advantage of the casualised labour increasingly used by contracting companies to reduce their costs. "We are seeing one of the most unrecordable, unnoticed disgraces of our time, where we see the whole of our country casualised with temporary agency workers and migrant labour."

It's clear. As far as Woodley is concerned, contracting is "a disgrace."

Woodley continues: "We will target the people who call the tune so that they can't say that poor pay and hours is not their responsibility. We will do what we need to do."

Woodley is clearly seeking to force the hand of current Chancellor of the Exchequer (and soon-to-be prime minister) Gordon Brown. Woodley clearly believes that contracting is wrong, and that all labour should be run under rigid employment schemes. This comes at a time when the Chancellor is also calling for a more flexible labour force in the UK.

“ UK plc would be far poorer without the vital work contractors do ”

Tom Hadley-REC

UK A Poorer Place Without Contractors

Speaking at a press conference on April 12, Tom Hadley, director of the London-based Recruitment and Employment Confederation ([REC](#)) pointed out that today has seen yet another attempt by the trade unions to back Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, into a corner over the rights of agency workers.

Contracting industry representatives rejected the comments. Says Hadley: "The trade unions keep pushing on the agency worker issue. This comes as no surprise as the Union bosses are circling the Chancellor hoping to influence the platform to become PM."

According to Hadley: "The unions are pushing for temps to receive the same employment terms and conditions as permanent workers from the moment they start an assignment. The REC backs good working conditions for the UK's temp workforce and is working with the [DTI](#) to improve the lot of vulnerable agency workers. UK plc would be much poorer without the vital work that these temps do. But it would be a mistake to introduce legislation - and more red tape for the recruitment industry - for the sake of it."

The REC's newly-published 360° Tracking Survey has found that 77% of temps were satisfied with their assignments in 2006 while only 11% of temps said they were dissatisfied to any degree. The unions continue to push the perception that temps are vulnerable and exploited in the workplace - the evidence suggests quite the contrary as Hadley explains.

“ 77 per cent of contractors are satisfied with their work ”

Tom Hadley-REC

"The REC calls on Gordon Brown and the Labour Party to listen to the evidence - not the rhetoric on this issue," Tom Hadley urged.

"Temps are a vital part of our successful and flexible labour market. The viability of temporary agency work must be preserved if the recruitment industry is going to continue to place 1.2 million temps into work every week," Hadley adds.

The REC is working with the [Professional Contractors Group](#) in a lobbying campaign against trade union rigidism. The two organisations are also working together in an effort to reduce the effects of the attack by the Treasury on managed service companies, an attack that is directed against the contracting industry specifically.

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