

PCG and REC agree on contractor code of conduct

For the first time, a specific set of rules of ethics for agents, recruiters, and contractors has been set out, and all parties involved have agreed to it.

Three Codes of Conduct

Recruiters and agents have agreed to it, through the London-based trade organisation, the [Recruitment and Employment Confederation](#). Contractors have agreed to it through the London-based [Professional Contractors Group](#). And, although the code is voluntary, members of the two groups will be judged by it.

With the plethora of laws, regulations, and guidance that is building up around the contracting industry, this code of conduct is a welcome step to providing basic good practice.

Two REC codes have been created to ensure the highest possible standards of practice are met and maintained throughout by member recruitment agencies and consultants. One code is designed for working with clients, and the other is for dealings with jobseekers and contractors, including one person limited companies working within the sector.

Working closely with REC, PCG has also drawn up its own voluntary code of conduct for contractors in their dealings with recruitment agencies.

Greater Confidence

David Ramsden, chairman of PCG said: "It will be much easier for a contractor and an agency to start a relationship with confidence if each knows that the other will offer a certain standard of conduct and behaviour. For this reason I'm pleased to see this initiative going ahead and hope that many agencies and contractors will sign up to it."

Contractors can now expect best practice from agencies, as Ramsden points out. "Agencies are obliged, for example, to keep contractors informed about the status of an application and to forward CV's only with a contractor's prior knowledge. Agencies are also obliged to ensure they are kept up-to-date with any legislation that may affect them."

“ It will be much easier for a contractor and an agency to start a relationship with confidence if each knows that the other will offer a certain standard of conduct ”

David Ramsden-PCG Chairman

A Point of Reference

Contractors also agree to a code of conduct. "By signing up to the voluntary code, a contractor is agreeing to maintaining best practices at all times - for example attending interviews as arranged, sticking to the contracts and honouring work commitments," Ramsden points out.

"It is certainly a step forward in driving up standards within the IT and Comms industry," Ramsden continues.

PCG and REC decided that the new codes were needed because of the raft of specialist legislation that now covers the IT and Comms industry. These regulations include age discrimination, umbrella companies and IR35 best practice. As a result, the REC invited PCG to devise its own similar code guaranteeing the same level of professional standards for its members who sign up to the code when dealing with agencies.

A notable section of the recruiter code obliges agencies to exercise "Transparency." This means that agencies are obliged not to advertise leads when they don't have jobs, and not to provide any false information to contractors.

Further, all fees, charges and services provided must be explicitly and fully disclosed prior to the acceptance of an assignment, or prior to any work being undertaken for a client.

“ It is a real step forward for the industry ”

David Ramsden-PCG Chairman

There's no direct way to enforce the codes of conduct, but the important thing is that they are there for reference, and should you feel your agent has violated the code, you'll be able to cite chapter and verse when you complain.

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