

Contractor doctor: how can I avoid a gap when going from permie to contracting?

Dear Contractor Doctor,

After the promise of a pay rise not materialising on my recent appraisal I've decided to vote with my feet and go contracting. My notice period is 4 weeks. How should I go about making the transition to ensure I'm not out of work for too long?

Thanks

Kevin

Contractor Doctor says:

If we had a penny for every time a permie failed to get a promised pay rise we'd have retired years ago. In the contract market, this kind of 'promise' of future pay rises does not exist. Everyone legally agrees in writing beforehand what work will be done and what the payment will be.

Managers simply cannot play the loyalty card to motivate contractors. This can come as quite a shock to managers who are not used to managing contractors.

To answer your question about when to start looking for contracts, here's a brief suggested action plan and some pointers to further useful articles:

Get your [high impact CV](#) ready as soon as possible and ensure it is [targeted](#) towards your chosen market. See [CV Writing for Contractors](#)

6 weeks before wishing to start contracting send your CV to all agencies and post it on the main job boards: [Jobserve](#); [CW Jobs](#).

With 4 weeks to go, hand in your notice.

With 3 weeks to go start applying for jobs via email that you source from the on line job boards.

With 2 weeks to go, start applying for as much as you can and chase agents on the phone

With less than 2 weeks to go fully ramp up your contract search process.

If your skills are heavily in demand then you might not need to [quit your job before applying for contracts](#). Bear in mind that if you are in competition with other contractors who are immediately available then you will always go to the back of the queue simply because the agent has more chance of closing a deal.

One common concern is being able to afford to bridge the gap between permanent employment and contracting. Payments to contractors are either weekly or monthly and are typically made a few days after receiving a signed timesheet. If receive a final payout from your employer and then get a weekly contract it is possible that you cash flow could become more positive. Be aware though that your second contract could be monthly.

Good luck with going contracting. Please contact us again if you need any further help.

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