

SMART RECRUITMENT WARNS AGAINST PROSECUTION

Smart Recruitment has a strong message for all those involved in the recruitment of Labour in the Food, Agricultural, Horticultural and Farming industries – if you take workers from an agency that does not have the Gang masters license YOU could face a 10 year jail sentence, a hefty fine or even personal fines for company directors.

The deaths of the cockle pickers at Morecambe Bay in February 2004 highlighted the exploitation of immigrants by so-called "gang masters" in the multimillion-dollar cockling industry and led to calls for tighter regulation. The Gang masters License is a direct result and there are serious penalties for those operating in the Food, Agricultural, Horticultural and Farming industries that do not adhere to the legislation.

Helen Stacey, Director of Smart Recruitment warns, "We can not under-estimate the impact this legislation will have for the Recruitment and Food, Agricultural, Horticultural, Farming industries. It means that all companies covered by this must take temporary labour through a fully licensed labour provider. This means the labour provider must go through a costly and stringent process to attain the standards required by law to gain a "Gang Master Licence". Ignorance of the law will not be a worthy excuse if companies are found recruiting staff from agencies that have not been accredited with the license. Anyone found taking labour from an agency will be held fully responsible if that agency does not have accreditation. Gaining the license is a lengthy and expensive process, which will take a minimum of 12 weeks. The licence is mandatory as of 1st October 2006 – less than 12 weeks away! Anyone attempting to gain accreditation who may find they have standards or processes which need resolving before it can be awarded, simply won't make the deadline."

Helen continues, "Passing the gang masters audit is a lengthy, detailed, and costly process, taking an absolute minimum of 12 weeks from start to finish. If your labour supplying employment agency has not yet started the gang masters licensing process, it is very unlikely they will gain accreditation by the end of September. You can check if your labour provider has applied or has been accredited with a gang masters license by going to www.gla.gov.uk."

Out of the hundreds of recruitment agencies based in Dorset just 3 have been accredited to date – one of which is Smart Recruitment. Thanks to their diligent and dynamic approach Smart Recruitment were accredited with the award following a recent and stringent audit process.

Smart Recruitment urge companies and their executives not to leave themselves or their businesses exposed to prosecution and potential fines and/or imprisonment.

Having achieved their licence, Smart Recruitment can offer anyone with concerns advice for their business. Contact Helen Stacey on 01202 629000 for the Bournemouth branch or 01202 66522 for the Poole branch. Alternatively visit www.smartgroup.co.uk or www.rec.uk.com for industry information.

~ENDS~



Caption:- Helen Stacey issues a warning to local companies based in the Food, Horticulture, Agriculture and Farming sectors.

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