



102 Frimley House
5 The Parade, High Street
Frimley
Surrey, GU16 7JQ
Tel: 01276 509306
Fax: 01276 761076
Email: info@labourproviders.org.uk
Website: www.labourproviders.org.uk

ALP Press Release - for immediate release - 22 May 2008

Contact: Mark Boleat, Chairman - 07770 4413777

ALP CHAIRMAN CALLS FOR JOINED-UP APPROACH TO LABOUR MARKET REGULATION

In his speech to the annual meeting of the Association of Labour Providers, the Chairman of the Association, Mark Boleat has called for a joined up approach to labour market regulation by the government.

He said that –

“The GLA is able to bring to bear huge resources on a very small sector of the economy, that is labour supply by labour providers to the food and agriculture market. This is quite out of all proportion to the malpractice in this sector as opposed to others. You may think that at the centre of government somebody has made a rational decision based on all of the evidence that the need for the Gangmasters Licensing Authority exists because malpractice in respect of employment of labour is far greater among labour providers who serve the food industry than among any other labour providers or indeed among any other employers. There is not a shred of evidence to support this; on the contrary there is strong evidence that equal malpractice exists on the part of direct employers and on the part of labour providers in other sectors of the economy. The scope of the Gangmasters Licensing Act is determined by the scope of the government department responsible for it, not by the scope of malpractice.”

He pointed out that a number of laws and regulations, for example in respect of the minimum wage and effectively enforced only in the sectors of the economy for which the GLA has responsibility, because there are no resources for enforcement in other sectors.

Mark Boleat called specifically for the abolition of two specific regulatory requirements –

“The Government should repeal the separate arrangements for the Agricultural Minimum Wage as there is no justification for these given the National Minimum Wage arrangements. And it should get rid of those features that have turned the National Minimum Wage from a sensible concept into a bureaucratic nightmare.

Similarly, the Government should repeal the Worker Registration Scheme, a scheme introduced purely to appease the media; a scheme which charges the lowest paid workers £90 simply to be part of a statistical exercise; a scheme that represents all of the very worst of policy making and this from a labour government and something tolerated by the trade unions.”

He also called on the government to “stop the nonsense of seeking to merge the GLA into the Health and Safety Executive”. He added –

“The arguments for setting up the GLA may have been weak and the GLA but there is no sense in merging it into the Health and Safety Executive, an agency with which it has no affinity. A year ago at our AGM, the Farming Minister announced that there would shortly be a consultation on this issue. There has been no consultation. The only reason for this is

**Representing and supporting labour providers in the agriculture, fresh produce
food manufacturing and packing sectors**

that this is disagreement within Government as I am sure is the case. I would be surprised if DEFRA supported the merger. I suspect that the Treasury and BERR support the merger, not on the grounds that it would be desirable in any way but simply on the grounds that the Government have said that they would do it and they could announce that they have got rid of one regulator. The failure to make any announcement is damaging to the GLA and damaging to its cause, and the Government needs to end this uncertainty as soon as possible.”

ENDS

Notes:

The Association of Labour Providers (ALP) is the specialist trade association for organisations that provide and use temporary, contract and seasonal workers within the food, agricultural and other GLA regulated sectors.

The ALP is a centre of expertise and good practice on temporary labour issues for both labour providers and labour users alike.

The ALP’s goal is to help improve the standard of labour provision in the food supply chain whilst supporting the need for an ethically managed, cost effective, flexible labour force within the sector.

The ALP welcomes growers, producers and packers as Associate Members.

The ALP Chairman is Mark Boleat and Director is David Camp

A list of members and further information can be found at www.labourproviders.org.uk.

Contact 01276 509306 or info@labourproviders.org.uk for further details about the ALP.