



Building Services Engineering  
**EMPLOYMENT AGENCY ALLIANCE**

Annual

Rep  rt

2010/11

[www.agencyalliance.org.uk](http://www.agencyalliance.org.uk)



## From the Chairman

### Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan

This year, I am able to confirm with some degree of satisfaction that, during the past 12 months, the Building Services Engineering Employment Agency Alliance has been able to deliver on its promises in a number of key areas.

These advances are addressed in rather more detail elsewhere in this document, but I should like to take this opportunity to touch here upon one or two of them.

Firstly, the need – originally highlighted by the Alliance – for a mechanism to aid understanding of the qualifications of overseas workers (and how they relate to the UK qualification system) was met by the introduction of the SummitSkills Equivalence Framework, which Alliance members can access online.

And, secondly, the Alliance produced, in collaboration with HVCA, expert guidance on the implications of the Agency Workers Regulations – which come into effect in October of this year – both for employment agencies and for their building services engineering contractor clients.

Thirdly – and most significantly – real progress was made, via a series of positive discussions, on the further development of the *key commitment* that obliges Alliance members to make a tangible contribution towards the industry's training efforts.

It is also worth noting that all of these achievements were brought about via the strategic working relationships which the Alliance has developed, maintained and enhanced with a range of other organisations across the sector, and to which it remains fully committed.

Indeed, I believe the record shows that, although growth in membership terms may have been modest – with just one net gain recorded over the year – the status of the Building Services Engineering Employment Agency Alliance has yet again been considerably enhanced, and that the organisation is increasingly being seen as playing a valuable and central role in representing the interests of the sector as a whole.

Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan

## Purpose

The Building Services Engineering Employment Agency Alliance was established by the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA) as a voluntary grouping of employment businesses that supply personnel to contractors across building services engineering.

The existence of the Alliance recognises the important role which employment businesses play in the sector's supply chain, and the absolute need for clear standards by which their performance can be judged.

The Alliance facilitates strategic dialogue between contractors and their manpower suppliers on a range of key issues, including new and proposed legislation, workforce competence, education and training, and health and safety.

Compliance with recognised industry standards – known as the Alliance's *Key Commitments* – is a fundamental condition of Alliance membership.

The verification of such compliance involves regular third-party auditing of the operations of a business.

This process is carried out by an independent auditor every three years – with an annual compliance inspection in each intervening year.

## Alliance Membership

At the end of its third year of existence – in March 2011 – membership of the Alliance comprised 18 businesses.

In what has been another very demanding period for the industry, it is pleasing to be able to report that the total membership size has shown a net gain of one during the year covered by this annual report.

## Agency Workers Regulations

After responding to the Government's consultation on the proposed regulations in 2009, the Alliance was pleased that (although the then Government was not amenable to persuasion as to their general content) agreement was reached on the deferment of their introduction until the latest possible date – 1 October

2011 – in order to allow agencies and their clients to adjust accordingly.

Following debate with members, the Executive Committee of the Alliance decided that appropriate advice and guidance should be produced on the implications of the Agency Workers Regulations. This was considered necessary in order to emphasise the additional responsibilities the regulations will place on both the hirer and the agency to share relevant workforce information, and to reflect this in the terms and conditions enjoyed by individual agency workers.

The working party which had originally been established by the Alliance and the HVCA to develop a joint response to Government consultations on the regulations was re-convened to draft the guidance – which will be launched at the third annual general

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## Marketing Opportunity

During the year, arrangements were made for the inclusion of accurate and comprehensive details of Alliance members to be published in the 2011 edition of *The Specifier's Guide to Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning*, which is produced on behalf of the HVCA by EMAP Inform, publisher of *H&V News*. Complimentary copies of *The Specifier's Guide* were issued to Alliance members in January 2011, and of a subsequent *HVCA Member Update* in May.

## Equivalence Framework

A key issue which emerged in the exploratory discussions that HVCA arranged with a cross-section of agencies when establishment of the Alliance was being contemplated was the need to provide a mechanism to aid understanding of the vocational qualifications presented by overseas workers, and – in particular – how they might relate to the National and Scottish Vocational Qualification (NVQ/SVQ) levels of the UK qualification system.

In order to produce such a tool, SummitSkills – the sector skills council for building services engineering – has collaborated with the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) for the UK, a quasi-Government body which specialises in providing information on the international comparability of vocational qualifications.

At the Alliance's first annual general meeting in July 2009, a development manager from SummitSkills provided a "walk through" of the web-based tool which was, at that time, under development. This work was completed during the year, and the SummitSkills Equivalence Framework can now be accessed online by Alliance members.

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meeting of the Alliance on 13 July 2011.

Alliance members will be able to use the jointly branded document in explaining the implications of the regulations to their clients.

## Commitment to Training

Through the *Key Commitments*, Alliance members, and applicants for membership, recognise that they must make a tangible contribution to the industry's training efforts.

In the light of this, they agree to commit to an involvement in future arrangements that may be proposed by employers' associations in the industry (ie, HVCA and others as appropriate) and by individual client contractors concerning the widening of the base of training provision in the industry.

Transferring this particular *key commitment* from aspiration to practical implementation was the subject of a half-day conference organised by the Alliance on 27 May 2010.

This proved to be a lively and well-attended

## "Deeming" Tax Legislation

As described in last year's annual report, some members of the Alliance had expressed some concern about proposals being developed by the Treasury and HMRC which would presume all workers in the construction industry to be employed unless certain exemptions were met, and so be treated as PAYE workers in relation to tax and National Insurance contribution – the so called "deeming" legislation.

Many contractors and agencies believe that this discriminates unjustifiably against construction sector workers, would add unnecessarily to costs, and could have the unforeseen effect of forcing manpower procurement practice towards the black market.

In order to raise awareness of this issue, a presentation on the Government's proposals was given at the Alliance's second annual general meeting on 20 September 2010, by the director of the Joint Taxation Committee for the Construction Industry, of which HVCA is a subscribing member.

The latest indications from the Government are that the civil servants who are working on the "deeming" legislation will also be drafting the legislation covering child allowance, and will have been working on the possibility of a graduate tax.

It would seem, therefore, that, although the "deeming" legislation has not been dropped, it is quite likely to be delayed.



event, with good debate, a high degree of open-mindedness and an expression of commitment from Alliance members to principles that have the potential to help the industry move forward on this issue.

The Alliance Executive Committee has held three follow-up meetings – one immediately after the conference, and a further one on 15 November 2010 – to review the work that had been requested by the Committee.

The November meeting recognised that some of the key issues needed to be developed and further refined. A detailed presentation on a proposed approach to enable agencies to engage in apprentice training – which had been developed in collaboration with Building Engineering Services Training (BEST)

## Governance

During the year, the Executive Committee, the principal forum of the Alliance, met on three occasions, chaired by the independent chairman Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan – who, during the year covered by this report, was re-appointed to serve for a further term of three years.

The Committee is giving consideration to arrangements for communicating in more detail with the wider body of the membership between meetings of the Executive Committee.

Consideration is being given, too, to the frequency of independent auditing of Alliance members, with particular regard to the annual compliance inspections in each of the two intervening years between main audits.

The current arrangement will be the subject of detailed review by the Executive Committee during the forthcoming months.

The personnel listed below left served as members of the Executive Committee during the year.

the HVCA's managing agency – was staged during a subsequent Executive Committee meeting on 30 March 2011, following which the Committee agreed to recommend this approach to the membership.

Two briefing meetings were subsequently held to receive a detailed presentation of the model. At these, members signalled their commitment to the initiative, but were concerned about the ability of employers to commit to providing training places at the workplace in the current trading environment.

Initial consultation with contractors and agencies has revealed that the concept developed by the Alliance is, indeed, innovative – but, more importantly, inherently attractive – and that there are points for further development. This work will be taken forward during the coming months – in such a way, it is hoped, as to attract “pump priming” Government funding.

### *Employment business representatives:*

**Frank Boyle, On-Site Group**

**Iain Coates/Paul Hoffman, Diamond**

**M&E Engineering Ltd (now Diamond  
Construction & Engineering Recruitment Ltd)**

**Mark Evans, Phoenix Resourcing Services Ltd**

**Gary Harrald, Capital Group**

**Jim Simms, BMS Group Ltd**

### *Contractor representatives:*

**Pete Curtis, Briggs and Forrester  
Engineering Services Ltd**

**John McKay, Vaughan Engineering Ltd**

**Mike Taylor, Lorne Stewart Plc**

**Peter Rimmer, HVCA**



# Building Services Engineering EMPLOYMENT AGENCY ALLIANCE

Membership of the Building Services Engineering Employment Agency Alliance comprises the following companies.

## 1st Step Solutions Ltd

[www.1ststeprecruitment.co.uk](http://www.1ststeprecruitment.co.uk)

Year established: 2004

Contact: **Max White**

info@1ststeprecruitment.co.uk

Branches: Chesterfield, Dartford

## ABC Contract Services Ltd

[www.abccuk.net](http://www.abccuk.net)

Year established: 1974

Contact: **Paul Nolan**

paul.nolan@abccuk.net

Branches: Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Fareham, Gateshead, Glasgow, Swindon, Warrington

## ATR Fusion

[www.atrltd.co.uk](http://www.atrltd.co.uk)

Year established: 2005

Contact: **Darryl Fordham**

darryl.fordham@atrfusion.com

Branches: Birmingham, Chiswick, City of London, Manchester, Weatherby, Whiteley

## BMS Group

[www.bmsgroupltd.co.uk](http://www.bmsgroupltd.co.uk)

Year established: 1996

Contact: **Jim Simms**

jim.simms@bmsgroupltd.co.uk

Branches: Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Eastbourne, Fareham, Hartlepool, Leicester x 2, Lincolnshire, Livingstone, London x 3, Manchester, Middlesbrough

## Capital Group

[www.capital-group.uk.com](http://www.capital-group.uk.com)

Year established: 1969

Contact: **Gary Harrald**

information@cap-recruit.co.uk

Branches: Barking, Bishop's Stortford, Bolton, Bridgend, Chelmsford, Holborn, Wimbledon

## CSS Recruitment Services Ltd

[www.csspeople.co.uk](http://www.csspeople.co.uk)

Year established: 1994

Contact: **Linda Gleeson**

linda@csspeople.co.uk

Branches: Birmingham, Braintree, London, Stockport, Thetford

## Diamond Construction

### & Engineering Recruitment Ltd

[www.dcer.co.uk](http://www.dcer.co.uk)

Year established: 1983

Contact: **Paul Hoffman**

info@dcer.co.uk

Branches: Wickford

## Excell Group

[www.excellgroup.com](http://www.excellgroup.com)

Year established: 2004

Contact: **Tony Higginson**

info@excellgroup.com

Branches: Eastleigh, London

## FastTrack Management Services (London) Ltd

[www.fttrack.co.uk](http://www.fttrack.co.uk)

Year established: 1993

Contact Name: **Dave Horne**

enquiries@fttrack.co.uk

Branches: Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, London, London Heathrow, Watford



**Gulmanda Site Services Ltd**

[www.gulmanda.co.uk](http://www.gulmanda.co.uk)

Year established: 1973

Contact: **Gerardine Hickey**

ger.hickey@gulmanda.co.uk

Branches: Aylesbury, Liverpool,  
London, Manchester

**Jark Construction Ltd**

[www.jark.com](http://www.jark.com)

Year established: 1996

Contact: **Kathy Mitchell**

kmitchell@jark.co.uk

Branches: Nationwide

**Meridian Business Support Ltd**

[www.meridianbs.co.uk](http://www.meridianbs.co.uk)

Year established: 1989

Contact: **Matt Geary**

mgeary@meridianbs.co.uk

Branches: Nationwide

**On-Site Group Ltd**

[www.onsiterecruitmentsolutions.com](http://www.onsiterecruitmentsolutions.com)

Year established: 2003

Contact: **Darren Burnett**

darren.burnett@onsiterecruitmentsolutions.com

Branches: Finchley, Portsmouth

**Optima Site Solutions Ltd**

[www.optimasitesolutions.com](http://www.optimasitesolutions.com)

Year established: 2002

Contact: **Antony Weir**

antonyweir@optimasitesolutions.com

Branches: Hampton, London

**Phoenix Resourcing Services Ltd**

[www.prsjobs.com](http://www.prsjobs.com)

Year established: 1999

Contact: **Mark Evans**

mbe@prsjobs.com

Branches: London and regional  
offices with national coverage

**Rullion Alltrades Ltd**

[www.rullion.co.uk/ral](http://www.rullion.co.uk/ral)

Year established: 1992

Contact: **Dominic Marston**

ral.corporate@rullion.co.uk

Branches: Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff,  
Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, London,  
Manchester, Newcastle

**Time 4 Recruitment Ltd**

[www.t4recruitment.com](http://www.t4recruitment.com)

Year established: 2001

Contact: **Chris Williams**

chris.williams@t4recruitment.com

Branches: Bristol, Cardiff

**Vital Resources Ltd**

[www.vital-resource.com](http://www.vital-resource.com)

Year established: 1983

Contact: **Mike Power**

mike.power@vital-resource.com

Branches: Aberdeen, Basingstoke, Birmingham,  
Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow x 2, Liverpool,  
London x 2, Manchester, Newcastle,  
Stockton-on-Tees, Swindon,  
Warwickshire

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# Building Services Engineering EMPLOYMENT AGENCY ALLIANCE

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## Membership secures for Alliance members:

- access to the HVCA's regional, regional branch and specialist group networks, in order to arrange promotions, presentations, seminars and other joint activities on a locally agreed basis, as well as attendance at HVCA regional meetings;
- attendance at meetings of the Engineering Services Contractors Safety Groups;
- complimentary copies of HVCA publications, including *HVCA Newslink* and *The Specifier's Guide*;
- access to HVCA technical and specialist publications at member-discounted rates;
- inclusion on HVCA training courses at member-discounted rates.

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