



GLA'S WORST FIND

The GLA has found its worst incident of non-compliance in a shocking case in Lancashire.

The appalling catalogue of failures discovered at a Lancashire gangmaster business including paying workers well below the minimum wage, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority immediately revoked the licence.

The record failures totalled 242 points in non-compliances, when 30 would be enough to revoke the licence.

Jose Rosa was the director of Plus Staff 24 based in Skelmersdale, but previously revoked gangmaster Maria Baptista was lurking in the background raising suspicions that Rosa who used to operate as a driver for her was acting as a front to continue her exploitative ways.

A group of over 30-plus Latvian fruit pickers were subjected to appalling treatment that kept them trapped in the employment of Mr Rosa, the workers did not receive minimum wage and deductions left at least one worker owing the gangmaster money after a month of toiling in the fields. If the workers needed money they were given loans with a repayment rate of six per cent.

West Lancashire MP Rosie Cooper said: "I am calling on all the authorities to use every power they have to ensure companies are operating according to, and within the law. No-one should be exploited in such a greed-driven and cynical way. These practices belong to history not in the 21st century."

Paul Whitehouse, GLA chairman said: "This is a flagrant abuse of power over workers. When a human being has worked hard for a month and gets paid nothing after deductions and even owes the gangmaster money, how are they supposed to survive?"

"We have serious concerns over the involvement of Maria Baptista who was operating in the background of this

business. She has had a GLA licence revoked in the past and we will ensure that any future attempt to obtain a licence will be subject to very close scrutiny. Any other gangmaster thinking of employing her would be well advised to think again."

Issues uncovered included:

- Workers were not paid the national minimum wage as charges for transport, worker registration scheme and accommodation reduced the wages to below the NMW.
- Deductions from wages were not included on the wage slip but was hidden on a separate document.
- Workers lived in filthy and dangerous houses without suitable bedding and any electrical safety documentation whilst having to use a toilet covered in mould.
- Holiday entitlement and sick pay was not recorded or had not been paid to the workers despite being this being included in their terms and conditions
- Workers were ferried to the fields in an uninsured minibus sometimes driven by an underage driver.
- Mr Rosa lied to the GLA when he claimed a former revoked gangmaster Maria Baptista was working for him for free when a payslip for her was found.
- The methods of deducting money from the workers exactly mimicked the methods used at Maria Baptista's previous business.

Mr Jose Rosa also failed the competence and capability test to hold a GLA licence and has been deemed no longer to be fit and proper to hold a licence.

If Plus Staff 24 continues to supply workers or provide a labour service without a licence to the regulated sectors, the GLA would take prosecution action.

NEWS IN BRIEF



APSCO NEWBIE

Global recruiter Antal International has joined the leading recruitment industry body, APSCO. "We were attracted by APSCO's commitment to professionalism and delivery and by the opportunity to forge links with other like-minded businesses through the association's conferences and networking events," says Graeme Read, Antal's group managing director, pictured. "We're delighted to welcome Antal to APSCO" says CEO Ann Swain. "There is no doubt that they will add value as members and it is great to see an international businesses acknowledging that our ethics and approach are relevant to staffing companies the world over."

NPS SUCCESS

Specialist recruitment consultancy, Badenoch and Clark, has been re-awarded a place on a Buying Solutions framework agreement for temporary staff. The Non-Permanent Staff (NPS) Framework Agreement enables public sector organisations access, through a carefully selected specialist group of suppliers, to the very best temporary and contract professionals in the marketplace while achieving value for money.

BOARD VIEW

Jobsite's latest Online Recruitment Market Tracker report shows that while more companies are recruiting overall, fewer vacancies are being advertised, suggesting that it is still critical hires that are being made rather than widespread recruitment.

AWR CLARIFIED

A new online AWR resource and knowledge bank has been established by Parasol at understandingawr.co.uk, with the aim of helping both recruiters and contractors get to grips with the legislation as the countdown begins to its introduction. Rob Crossland, chief executive of Parasol, said: "We've seen a step in change in the coverage for the AWR in recent weeks, and this will only intensify as the countdown to its introduction continues. "It's important that our industry starts to discuss the AWR now, but I have been reading confused messages regarding the legislation from various parties and it's equally important that we all get our facts straight."

REWARD CONUNDRUM

The proportion of HR professionals who believe that their organisation, or their client, is poorly prepared to manage the risks around how they reward their staff has grown in the past 12 months, according to a CIPD member survey. Fifteen per cent of respondents thought that their organisation is poorly prepared to deal with these risks, up from nine per cent in 2009.

HELPING HEROES

ForceSelect, a new recruitment company has been set up to help service leaver find jobs once they leave the military. It has been founded by former Army officer Hugh Andr e and supported by former chief of the general staff General Sir Mike Jackson and SAS hero and bestselling author Andy McNab.